NATION

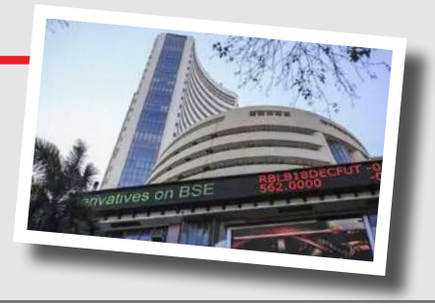
Iranian crude returns to India after seven years

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

Mkts dive nearly 1% as US-Iran talks fail

≫ Page: 7 ≪



SPORTS

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

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Two burnt bodies found in canal near Koppal

KOPPAL, 13 APRIL

Two decomposed, partially burnt, decomposing bodies were found in the Masabahanchinal village in Kukanur taluk creating panic. The bodies were discovered in a canal that had been dug for laying a pipeline for a drinking water project along Koppal road. Local residents noticed a foul smell and found two decomposed bodies inside the canal. They immediately informed the police. The deceased were identified as Rudresh Gangavati, 23, and Ravi Ramanna Tatti, 32, residents of Kukanur town. The exact reason behind the suspected murder is unclear. Police suspect that they were murdered around four to five days ago, and their bodies were later dumped at the spot. A case has been registered and Kukanur Police Station officials have sent the bodies for an autopsy. — *SALAR NEWS*

SC: 34L people with pending SIR cases can't vote in WB

Court says it is 'premature' to interfere in the SIR process

NEW DELHI, 13 APRIL

The Supreme Court on Monday declined to entertain a plea by a group of 13 people seeking its intervention in the deletion of their names from the voter list during the Special Institutional Revision (SIR) in West Bengal.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi termed the petition "premature", directing the aggrieved parties to approach the established appellate tribunals instead. Justice Bagchi remarked that unless there is "enormous amount of voters excluded", the election results cannot be interfered with.

"If 10 percent does not vote and winning margin is more than 10 percent then...if it's less than 5 percent then we have to apply our mind," he said.

Polling for the first phase of West Bengal will be held on 23 and 29 April and results will be declared on 4 May.

People gather before a tribunal over the SIR in Murshidabad, West Bengal on Monday. Nearly 1 lakh cases are pending before each tribunal —*PTI*

The plea alleged that the Election Commission was summarily deleting names without following due process, and that appeals against these deletions were not being heard in a timely manner.

Senior advocate DS Naidu, appearing for the poll panel, informed the court that there are approximately 30 to 34 lakh appeals currently pending. "Every tribunal now has over one lakh appeals to handle," the bench noted.

However, Justice Bagchi said that the tribunals, manned by former judges, cannot be overburdened by fixing the timelines for adjudications.

"What is the question of allowing them to vote? If we allow this then, let us stop the voting rights of people who are included," CJI Kant said.

"It is not the end justifying the means, but the means justifying the end," Justice Bagchi said.

Justice Bagchi also referred to the sanctity of the electoral process and said the right to vote is not merely a constitutional formality but a "sentimental" pillar of democracy.

The court directed the petitioners Quaraisha Yeasmin and others to approach the appellate tribunals. —*PTI*

>>>More on Pages 3, 4, 5

Wreckage of vehicles after they were burnt during a protest by factory workers demanding a hike in wages, in Noida on Monday —*PTI*

Labour protests for higher wages in Noida turn violent

NOIDA/NEW DELHI, 13 APRIL

Protests by workers in Noida's factory hubs demanding wage hike turned violent on Monday as agitated workers torched private and police vehicles, vandalised public property and indulged in pelting of stones.

The protests paralysed traffic, leaving thousands of commuters stranded on different roads leading to Delhi during the morning rush hour. Queues of vehicles stretching for several kilometres were seen at the Delhi-Noida border.

A protester said that despite working 12-hour shifts, workers earn between Rs 11,000 and Rs 15,000, making it difficult to sustain a household.

Officials said a large number of workers from various industrial units in Phase 2 and Sector 60 gathered in the morning to press their long-pending demand for salary revision and raised slogans.

They said the workers are demanding a wage hike on the lines of neighbouring Haryana, among other things.

Similar protests were also reported from Sector 62 and Sector 84, including at a Motherson company unit. Protesters also blocked the National Highway 9 -- close to the Ghaziabad border and a key route connecting Delhi and western Uttar Pradesh.

Adequate police deployment has been ensured across industrial zones under the Gautam Buddh Nagar Commissionerate, the officials said. Gautam Buddh Nagar Additional Labour Commissioner Rakesh Dwivedi said the workers were primarily demanding a wage hike on the lines of neighbouring Haryana, along with basic facilities. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

A factory worker sits bleeding during the protest—*PTI*

K'taka issues healthy foods guidelines at govt events

BENGALURU, 13 APRIL

The Karnataka government has issued a nutrition advisory promoting healthier food and beverage choices at official meetings, functions, and events. Released by the Department of Health and Family Welfare Services, the advisory highlights that refreshments served at government programmes often fail to meet proper nutrition standards.

It recommends millet-based, low-fat, and low-sugar snacks, along with fresh fruits, salads, sprouts, and roasted nuts during meetings. Suggested beverages include green tea, buttermilk, and filtered or boiled water served in reusable containers.

For larger events, departments are advised to include at least one millet-based snack and two millet dishes in meals, alongside local and regional cuisine. Brown rice is preferred over white rice, and fresh, minimally processed foods are encouraged. Non-vegetarian options, if served, should include lean, well-cooked meat.

The advisory discourages fried, processed, and high-sugar foods, carbonated drinks, and plastic usage, while emphasising hygiene and sourcing food from local groups and cottage industries. —*PTI*

US starts blockade on Hormuz as Iran fumes

CAIRO, 13 APRIL

The US military began a blockade of all Iranian ports and coastal areas on Monday. US President Donald Trump warned that if any ship approached the blockade, they would be attacked and killed.

Iran called the blockade "piracy" and responded by threatening all ports in the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, as the fragile ceasefire appeared increasingly strained with the peace talks in Pakistan's Islamabad failing over the weekend.

"Security in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman is either for everyone or for no one," the Iran's state-media quoted the military as saying.

"No port in the region will be safe".

US Central Command (CENTCOM) announced that the blockade would be enforced "against vessels of all nations entering or departing Iranian ports and coastal areas."

However, the blockade won't affect ships transiting from non-Iranian ports.

'WILL PROSECUTE ANYONE BUYING IRAN OIL'

The US has threatened to "vigorously prosecute" anyone who buys or sells sanctioned Iranian oil, US Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche, said. China is a major buyer of Iranian oil. India used to be a major buyer until US imposed sanctions at the turn of the decade. —*PTI*

>>>More on Pages 3, 4, 6,

No LPG shortage for auto parts makers: Govt

Auto component manufacturers have not reported any serious LPG supply shortage, said Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Heavy Industries, Hanif Qureshi on Monday, adding that the government is in touch with industry body ACMA to ensure an adequate gas supply and prevent any supply chain disruptions. "If we look at the production base of March, then about 15 to 16 per cent increase in the production of vehicles has taken place in the month of March," he said.

K'taka sugarcane farmers to hold indefinite strike from 21 April

MYSURU, 13 APRIL

Karnataka State Sugarcane Growers Association State unit President Kurubur Shanthakumar on Monday said that the group has decided to launch indefinite protest against the State government and district administration from 21 April in Mysuru. Their core demand is the complete release of additional Rs 100 incentive per tonne for sugarcane supplied by farmers to sugar mills in 2025-26 season.

Speaking after holding a preliminary meeting with farmer leaders held at PWD Guest House in Mysuru, Shanthakumar said that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah announced the Rs 100 per tonne incentive after the massive agitation last November by farmers in Belagavi and other districts in North Karnataka. This was to be split equally between the State government and sugar mills.

While the State government has released its share of the subsidy, many sugar mills are yet to provide the mandated amount to farmers who have supplied sugarcane during 2025–26 season, he added.

Shanthakumar said that mills in North Karnataka had complied with the government directive, but factories such as the Bannari Amman Sugar Mills of Nanjangud and Male Mahadeshwara Sugar Factory at Kunthur in Kollegal taluk had not.

Other demands include uninterrupted seven hours of three phase of power supply to irrigation pumpsets during the summer and directing Kaveri Gramin and other rural banks to relax CIBIL score of loans to farmers. —*Salar News*

END OF AN ERA

Thounds of people gather to pay tribute to legendary singer Asha Bhosle during her last rites in Mumbai on Friday. Bhosle, who died on Sunday at the age of 92, was laid to rest with full state honours —*PTI* ***>>>MORE ON PAGES 5***

Staff accused in Nashik harassment case suspended: TCS

MUMBAI/NEW DELHI, 13 APRIL

IT major Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) on Sunday said that the firm has adopted a zero-tolerance policy towards harassment and coercion of any form for a long time and confirmed the suspension of employees allegedly involved in sexual harassment at its Nashik office.

The clarification comes in the wake of allegations of sexual harassment and forced religious conversion by eight female employees at the multinational company's office in Nashik.

Earlier this week, the police formed a special investigation team (SIT) to probe the complaints lodged by eight employees, who claimed that senior colleagues mentally and sexually harassed them, and the human resources department turned a deaf ear to their complaints. The police have since arrested seven people, including the company's female HR manager.

Meanwhile, employees' body NITES on Monday approached the Ministry of Labour and Employment seeking a detailed audit of POSH compliance in TCS. —*PTI*

'Women's reservation most crucial decision of century'

NEW DELHI, 13 APRIL

India stands on the brink of making one of the most significant decisions of the 21st century as Parliament meets to amend the Women's Reservation Act, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Monday.

Ahead of the three-day special sittings of Parliament beginning 16 April, Modi said that the amendment to the 'Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam' will realise the visions of the past and fulfil the resolutions of the future, as he hailed the contributions of women in governance and asserted that many of them are ready for bigger roles.

He also said that when the law was introduced in 2023, it was passed unanimously by all parties and there was a collective demand, particularly from the Opposition, for its implementation by 2029.

The 'Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam', known as the Women's Reservation Act, provided for the reservation of one-third of seats for women in the Lok Sabha and state Legislative Assemblies. The amendments will increase the number of Lok Sabha seats to 816, of which 273 will be reserved for women, amid a delimitation exercise. —*PTI*

>>>More on Pages 2, 3

7CM BELOW AVERAGE

Southwest monsoon to be below normal in India: IMD

NEW DELHI, 13 APRIL

The southwest monsoon (June to September) rainfall this year is expected to be below normal across the country, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecast said on Monday.

India is likely to receive 80 cm of rainfall during the season — the long period average (1971-2020) of the seasonal rainfall over India is 87 cm.

Speaking at a presser, DGM of the IMD Dr M Mohapatra, said, "Quantitatively, the seasonal rainfall over the country as a whole is likely to be 92 per cent of LPA with a model error of +/- 5 per cent."

One of the reasons for below normal rainfall could be the emergence of the El Niño conditions, which cause less rainfall in the country. Climate models indicate that El Niño conditions are likely to emerge around the month of June.

Currently, weak La Niña conditions are transitioning to ENSO-neutral conditions over the equatorial Pacific.

Also, climate models show that during the second half of the monsoon season, positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) conditions can develop.

"Positive IOD leads to more rainfall. So, we expect that this will counter the impact of El Niño during the second half of the monsoon season," Mohapatra said.

Compared to last year, the northern hemisphere snow cover area during the last three months was below normal, he added. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

NDA may re-nominate Harivansh as RS Dy Chairman

NEW DELHI, 13 APRIL

The ruling NDA is learnt to have pushed the case for re-electing Harivansh as deputy chairman of Rajya Sabha after the expiry of his term on the key post amid opposition to the move by a section of opposition parties.

Union Minister JP Nadda, who is also leader of the house in Rajya Sabha, is learnt to have discussed the re-election of Harivansh as deputy chairman with leaders of various parties, while trying to bring about a broad consensus on his name, sources said here on Monday. Opposition parties noted that post of Deputy Speaker in the Lok Sabha was lying vacant since 2019, and questioned the hurry for elections in the RS. —*PTI*

—SCREENGRAB

Elephant calf falls into well in Sulia taluk, rescue on

BIDAR, 13 APRIL

An elephant calf that fell into an abandoned 20-foot-deep well in Dakshina Kannada district was found to be stable, officials said on Monday. The incident occurred in the Sampaje Range of Sullia taluk in the Western Ghats, they said. Despite the fall, the animal appeared healthy and alert, raising hopes of a safe rescue, officials added. A 10-member team of forest personnel, led by the range forest officer of Sampaje, is engaged in the rescue operation. According to Manjunath, the range forest officer, officials are keeping the animal hydrated by sprinkling water into the well. Two excavators have been deployed to dig around the well and create a gradual earthen ramp to help the elephant's exit. Officials were confident of rescuing the animal. *—PTI*

17 injured as pvt bus overturns in Shivamogga

SHIVAMOGGA, 13 APRIL

Seventeen passengers were injured after a private bus overturned in Shikaripur town in Shivamogga district on Monday, police said. Of the injured, 15 sustained minor injuries, while two others suffered grievous ones, they said. They are all out of danger, police added. The incident occurred this morning when the bus had just entered Shikaripur town from Shivamogga, police said. The bus driver, in an attempt to avoid hitting a two-wheeler rider who came in its path, allegedly applied the brakes, following which the bus overturned, resulting in the accident. The incident was captured on CCTV cameras installed in the vicinity. With the help of locals who rushed to the spot immediately, the injured were taken to hospitals. *—PTI*

BEML bags Gulf export order worth USD 36.38 million

BENGALURU, 13 APRIL

The Bengaluru-based defence PSU, BEML, on Monday said it has secured an export order worth USD 36.38 million from the Gulf. The order entails the supply of heavy earthmoving equipment, the company said in a statement. Traditionally deployed in large-scale mining operations, these heavy earthmoving equipment have now been re-engineered for infrastructure development, according to BEML. "The heavy equipment platforms are designed for high-intensity reconstruction and strategic infrastructure development, incorporating critical performance and survivability enhancements to meet stringent global standards," the statement said. The project is also likely to include a comprehensive maintenance and lifecycle support contract, the company said. BEML will ensure operational readiness. *—PTI*

Sringeri Peetham to hold nationwide Ramayana exam

CHIKKAMAGALURU, 13 APRIL

Sringeri Sharada Peetham has announced a nationwide 'Srimad Ramayana Examination–2026' for school students, offering cash prizes up to Rs 50,000, officials said on Monday. Organised under its Bala Bharati initiative, the exam aims to encourage students to engage with the Ramayana during summer vacation while promoting awareness of Sanatana Dharma. The competition will have two levels for classes 4 to 6 and 7 to 10. Winners will receive prizes, including Rs 50,000 for first, Rs 40,000 for second and Rs 30,000 for third. A special prize of Rs 10,000 is announced. Top performers will get a sponsored visit to Sringeri. The first round is on 9 May. *—PTI*

Centre, State mull 500 acre industrial park in Mandya

It's an upgrade from HDK's previous 100-acre proposal

BENGALURU, 13 APRIL

The Union government has shown interest in establishing a 500-acre ARAI centre in Mandya district, Karnataka Minister MB Patil said on Monday.

Instead of the initially proposed 100 acres for the Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI) centre, State's Large and Medium Industries Minister talked with Union Minister for Heavy Industries HD Kumaraswamy, on possibility of developing a larger ecosystem by setting up an industrial park alongside the facility.

"If the ARAI centre is established on just 100 acres, it will remain a standalone facility. Instead, it would be more appropriate to develop a comprehensive industrial hub of at least 500 acres, incorporating the proposed ARAI centre and supporting the growth of the automobile sector. Union Minister Kumaraswamy has also agreed to this proposal," Patil said.

Karnataka Minister MB Patil with Union Minister for Heavy Industries HD Kumaraswamy *-X@MBPatil*

Both Ministers had held detailed discussions with officials at Vidhana Soudha. Accordingly, instructions have been issued to the Special Deputy Commissioner to identify suitable government or private land, Patil said.

An ARAI Centre conducts vehicle testing and certification, a release from Patil's office said.

"We had identified 105 acres near Basaralu, and this has largely been agreed upon. However, with the proposal to develop an industrial hub now under consideration, alternative land options have been suggested," he said.

"About 425 acres of land near Belluru, adjacent to the Bengaluru-Mangaluru National Highway, was acquired in 2021 for industrial purposes, with compensation yet to be fully disbursed. The Union government has been requested to consider this site as well," he added.

Additionally, some participants in the meeting suggested that an industrial hub could also be developed in the Pandavapura area adjoining the Thubinakere industrial area, as well as along the borders of Mandya taluk, the statement said. Another round of discussions will be held after receiving a detailed report from officials, it said.

In addition, Patil stated that about 25–50 acres of land is required for Andrew Yule Company Limited (AYCL) to set up its manufacturing unit in Mandya district. The company manufactures electrical equipment, large industrial fans, and transformers for industries. *—PTI*

CABINET RESHUFFLE AHEAD?

DKS urges restraint as Cong MLAs fly to Delhi for promotion

BENGALURU, 13 APRIL

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Monday urged Congress legislators to maintain party discipline as several MLAs visited New Delhi on Sunday to lobby for a Cabinet reshuffle. Shivakumar, the KPCC President, cautioned against harming the party's image, while adding that there was nothing wrong in meeting the party High Command.

"They must respect the party. They should not sit before the media and damage the party's name," Shivakumar told press in Bengaluru.

He said that everyone's future lies in the party, not in the media. "In the media, you may say whatever you want in your own way. So I appeal to all my MLAs that meeting party High Command is not wrong, but if unnecessary statements are made, we will have to act."

He indicated that he is awaiting formal inputs before taking any action.

He added that some of them had consulted him before leaving for Delhi and he said that even first-time MLAs can become Ministers.

The developments assume significance amid ongoing discussions within the ruling Congress over a possible cabinet rejig.K

Home Minister G Parameshwara also reiterated that there was nothing wrong in people having aspirations, but said the final decisions rest with the High Command.

"Our Chief Minister, the High Command, and our party (State) President decide about reshuffle. These three sit together and take a decision," he said. *—PTI*

A CULTURAL CARNIVAL

Folk artists take part in a procession starting from Vidhana Soudha Ambedkar Statue to Freedom Park on the eve of Ambedkar Jayanthi, in Bengaluru on Monday *—MOHAMMED ASAD*

Centre 'betraying' State by not releasing Bhadra funds: CM

CHIKKAMAGALURU, 13 APRIL

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday accused the Centre of "betraying" the State by not releasing funds for the Bhadra Upper Canal Project. Yet, the State's financial position is stronger than that of the Union government.

Speaking after inaugurating a bridge built at the cost of Rs 36 crore across the Bhadra backwaters connecting Handuru village to Narasimharajapura, laying the foundation stone for various development works and distribution of benefits, he said the government will continue to pursue development.

"The Opposition alleges that there is no money for development works, that the treasury has been emptied due to guarantee schemes, and that development has come to a standstill. However, our government has ensured development alongside the implementation of guarantees," Siddaramaiah asserted.

He cited Dr BR Ambedkar to say that political freedom must be supported by economic, social and educational empowerment and asserted that guarantee schemes themselves constitute development.

Building an egalitarian society is the objective of the Constitution, he said.

"The BJP criticises the guarantees in this State but, it is implementing such schemes in other states," he said. *—PTI*

Oppn to meet on women reservation on 15 April: Cong

BENGALURU, 13 APRIL

Congress President **Mallikarjun Kharge** on Monday said the Congress will convene a meeting of all the Opposition parties on 15 April to deliberate on the implementation of the Women's Reservation law.

He also accused the Centre of not being prepared to hold a comprehensive consultation with all stakeholders on the matter.

Addressing reporters here, he maintained that while the party fully supports the legislation, there is a need for wide discussions on its implementation given its broader national implications.

"The Centre has called a meeting. I have already replied to the letter written either by Kiren Rijiju or even the Prime Minister to me," Kharge said.

"If they (Centre) call all parties and allow discussions, we can participate and offer our suggestions. But they are not prepared to call all-party

meeting. That is why we are once again convening an all (opposition) party meeting on 15 April. Whatever decision we take in that all-party meeting, we will convey it," he added.

The Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha asserted that the Congress has consistently backed women's reservation and dismissed suggestions of opposing the legislation.

"Apart from that, none of us are opposed to Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam or women's reservation Act. We have already supported it, and it is an Act that was passed unanimously. They are simply trying to take political advantage of this," he claimed. *—PTI*

9 HELD FOR KILLING YOUTH CONG LEADER IN DHARWAD

DHARWAD, 13 APRIL

Nine men have been arrested in connection with the murder of a 32-year-old Youth Congress leader after assailants allegedly barged into his residence in Dharwad city, police said on Monday.

The incident took place at the deceased Fairoz Pathan's house in the Malapur area on the morning 10 April, creating panic among residents, they said.

City Police Commissioner N Shashikumar said that nine people were arrested on Sunday, and reprimanded to judicial custody. A few more are yet to be arrested, he said, noting that there were eye witnesses and the entire act has been captured on CCTV.

The deceased and the prime accused had a serious personal dispute, he said. The accused said during interrogations that they had daily confrontations with the victim.

However, the accused said that they were unaware that his frequent movement with groups of men were related to wedding planning. *—PTI*

Interfaith couple harassed, VHP claims love jihad

KOPPAL, 13 APRIL

A 24-year-old Hindu woman alleged that a group of 10 people in Koppal beat up her Muslim boyfriend while they were having lunch together on the premises of Koppal Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS).

However, the Vishva Hindu Parishat (VHP) alleged that youth, Mustafa, was harassing her, and said it was a case of love jihad.

The VHP filed a complaint at the Koppal Town Police, alleging that Mustafa was targeting the Hindu woman after getting her intoxicated.

VHP district President Dr Sangamesh Hiremath, who filed the complaint, claimed that thousands of photos and videos were recovered from two mobile phones belonging to Mustafa.

However, the woman termed the VHP's statements as being "false and bogus" and filed a countercomplaint at the same station.

She claimed that the VHP members their names, the snatched their phones from Mustafa and assaulted him during the encounter on 8 April at KIMS.

Notably, this comes after two cases of 'love jihad' in Hubbali. Koppal Town police have filed cases under Bharatiya Nyaya Samhita 126 (2),352, 351 (4) and 190. *—Salar News*

CATITUDE PROBLEM

Paternity row over kittens forces cops to break up cat fight

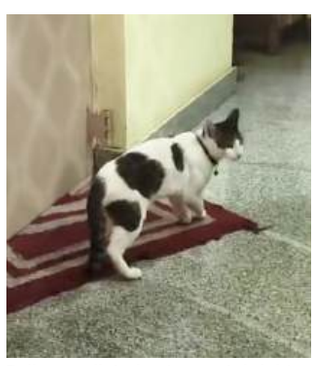
BENGALURU, 13 APRIL

Seshadripuram witnessed a domestic drama unfold with all the elements of a courtroom saga – disputed parentage, contested custody and at the heart of it were four distressed kittens.

An argument between neighbours over the "custody" of the kittens turned into a massive dispute that required the cops' intervention.

A resident's male cat allegedly sneaked in and impregnated a neighbour's female cat. Weeks later, the female gave birth to four kittens.

The female cat's owner was not happy, and brought the kittens to the male cat's owner, demanding that the latter take responsibility for raising the kittens as their cat was the alleged father. This demand soon escalated into a heated argument.



Police mediated pet parental rights *-SCREENGRAB*

- A resident's male cat allegedly sneaked in and impregnated a neighbour's female cat. Weeks later, the female gave birth to four kittens.

Abuses were exchanged in the presence of the distressed kittens. The situation worsened when the female cat's owner threw one of the kittens and Bengaluru City Police were alerted.

A Hoysala patrol unit team rushed to the spot to mediate. They listened to both sides, assessed the situation and defused the tension between the two pet parents. The team decided to hand over the kittens to a third party, which would ensure that neither of the pet parents would be burdened with taking care of the animals.

The officials stated that the timely mediation prevented the situation from escalating further.

The pet parents were told to maintain peace. *—Agencies*

Cong didn't betray Muslims: Rizwan on Davangere row

BENGALURU, 13 APRIL

Congress MLA Rizwan Arshad responded to the controversy surrounding the recent Davangere South bypolls, where some leaders alleged that the party "betrayed" Muslims. He said at a press conference that the party took decisions in order to secure a victory.

"Davanagere is a peaceful city with a significant minority population, especially Muslims. In the past, this city has seen serious communal riots. In such a place, if a BJP or RSS representative becomes an MLA, will peace and harmony be maintained? Is it wise to allow BJP to win by defeating Congress?" he said.

He added that only one Muslim candidates name was proposed to party leaders, when more should've been given if Muslims wanted a minority candidate in the assembly segment, saying the blame did not lie with a few a individuals. *—Salar News*

Gym trainer kills self, kin accuse woman

BENGALURU, 13 APRIL

A 27-year-old gym trainer reportedly died by hanging at his house in Nelamangala on the outskirts of the city.

The deceased's family is alleging blackmailing and harassment by a married woman, police said on Monday.

The deceased, identified as **Dileep**, was a bodybuilder who had won several competitions and was working as a fitness trainer at a gym, they said.

According to police, the incident occurred on Saturday night but only came to light after the woman sent a message to Dileep's sister informing her about his decision to take the extreme step.

Family members then broke open the door of the room and found him hanging from a ceiling fan.

Police said Dileep had befriended a 42-year-old married woman approximately two years ago at the gym where she used to come for fitness training.

During this period, they became friends and later it turned into a personal relationship.

Family members alleged that harassment by woman led to the man's death.

Before taking the extreme step, Dileep allegedly made a video call to the woman and told her about his decision, police said.

Authorities confirmed that the matter is currently under investigation by Nelamangala Town Police. *—PTI*

Help is available. Please call Tele Manas at 14416, or SAHAI at 080-25497777 for support.

— PTI

6 held for leaking 'Jana Nayagan' online in TN

CHENNAI, 13 APRIL

The Tamil Nadu cybercrime wing has arrested six individuals in connection with the unauthorised leak on Friday of Vijay's highly anticipated film 'Jana Nayagan' in HD ahead of its theatrical release, police said. Acting on a formal complaint, the state cybercrime investigation centre registered a case and arrested the accused on Sunday. The film, directed by H Vinoth and produced by KVN Productions, was widely touted as Vijay's final cinematic outing before he entered politics full-time. The individuals have been booked under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Information Technology Act, Copyright Act, and Cinematograph Act. The case is under investigation, and the names of the arrested have not yet been disclosed. —*PTI*

4 B'deshi nationals enter Assam illegally, held

GUWAHATI, 13 APRIL

Four suspected Bangladeshi nationals, including a minor, have been arrested in Guwahati in Assam, for entering India "without valid documents", police said on Monday. A broker who allegedly helped them has also been apprehended, they said. Based on reliable information, the police arrested the Bangladeshi nationals on the evening of 12 April. The broker, a resident of Barpeta district, is a taxi driver by profession, a police officer said. The Bangladeshis are currently at the Dispur Police Dtation and will remain there till the process of sending them back is completed, he said. A case has been registered against the broker under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS), the officer further said.—*PTI*

Was almost called corrupt, won't get justice: Kejriwal

NEW DELHI, 13 APRIL

Former chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday told Delhi High Court judge Swarana Kanta Sharma that her earlier decisions in the liquor policy cases "almost declared" him guilty and corrupt, and that he apprehends he would not get justice if she continues to hear CBI's plea against his discharge. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) convenor contended that under the law on recusal, the question is not of a judge's integrity or uprightness, but of "reasonable bias" in the mind of the litigant. He claimed that except for the CBI's petition and another involving a BJP opponent, no other case before her was being heard at the same "speed" and there was a trend of the court endorsing CBI's arguments. —*PTI*

EC appoints Odisha IPS officer as police observer in Bengal

KOLKATA, 13 APRIL

The Election Commission appointed IPS officer Sarvana Vivek M as Police Observer for the upcoming assembly elections in West Bengal. Vivek, a 2015-batch IPS officer of the Odisha cadre, will oversee police-related arrangements during the two-phase polls, said the notification issued on Sunday. The officer will be on deputation to the EC during the period of his assignment. Vivek will be stationed at the office of the Chief Electoral Officer in Kolkata, and is required to submit inputs to the EC occasionally, in line with directives. "The timeline of duty will start from the date of appointment, and will end on the date of completion of the election," a notification said. West Bengal will vote on 23 April. —*PTI*

Centre asked to drop paddy bonus: Stalin

Finance Minister says DMK trying to project itself as the saviour of farmers and Tamils

CHENNAI, 13 APRIL

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Monday said that the Centre had asked the state to review its existing bonus policy and consider discontinuing it on paddy, while asking Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to make the letter public.

Hours after the Chief Minister's post on 'X', uploaded a copy of the letter on her social media platform and said building food security required a constructive, continuous and positive engagement on agriculture with all stakeholders.

Tagging the finance minister, Stalin in his post said, the letter sent to the Chief Secretary of Tamil Nadu stated that since the state's additional bonus for paddy has led to bumper production, the state government should consider discontinuing the bonus.

He said that he had not stated anything that was not in that letter. Meanwhile, Sitharaman hit back at Stalin for creating "false narratives" over the issue, saying the DMK party is trying to project itself as the protector of farmers and Tamil people.

Sitharaman accused Stalin of misinterpreting the 9 January letter written by Expenditure Secretary V Vualnam to all state governments, and said that while most of the state governments across party lines understood the intent of the letter and responded in the spirit of cooperative federalism, only Stalin chose to "sensationalise" it.

Advising Stalin not to waste time on anti-Centre rhetoric, the Finance Minister asked him to explain to the people of Tamil Nadu why he is effectively giving away opportunities to foreign interests rather than making India and its people self-reliant in pulses and oilseeds. —*PTI*

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin; Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman —*PTI*

> **Prove in this election that the AIADMK and its ally the BJP have no space in Tamil Nadu.**
> **Annihilate them in the polls, and wisely choose the DMK to sustain the pace of growth**
> - Udhayanidhi Stalin, Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister

'Hologram' comes to TVK chief's aid for campaigning

CHENNAI, 13 APRIL

In a move that has redefined the landscape of political campaigning in Tamil Nadu, TVK candidate for Kumbakonam, Vinoth Ravi, has deployed a 3D hologram of actor-turned-politician Vijay to reach voters across the state for the April 23 Assembly elections.

The technology made its debut in the Kumbakonam Assembly constituency on April 12.

A life-sized, high-definition digital projection of TVK chief appeared alongside the party's local candidate. Visuals from the ground showed the "Hologram Vijay" delivering a synchronised speech from a campaign vehicle, creating an illusion of physical presence that drew crowds.

Vijay Chandran, TVK's Thanjavur district treasurer, said they decided to do this after a third-year student of AI and Data Science Praveen K told him about hologram marketing the possibility of 3D hologram.

According to Chandran, the move is a strategic response to the gruelling schedule of covering 200-plus constituencies that TVK is competing from.

Vijay lookalikes are now being sought after. —*PTI*

Hologram image of TVK Chief Vijay released by party —*x*

Kerala turnout at 79.63%, CEO denies delaying data

T'PURAM, 13 APRIL

Kerala chief electoral officer Ratan U Kelkar on Monday said voter turnout in the recently held Assembly elections stood at 79.63 per cent, while rejecting allegations that there was a delay in releasing polling data.

CPI(M) and Congress on Monday questioned the EC over the delay in the release of detailed polling data.

Senior Congress leader VD Satheesan has written to the Commission on the matter. He said the prompt release of such information was crucial to ensuring transparency, enabling public scrutiny and maintaining trust in the electoral process.

CPI(M) leader and General Education Minister V Sivankutty also flagged the delay, saying that in an era of advanced technology, such lag in compiling data raises concerns over transparency.

Kelkar said the 79.63 per cent turnout was based on available figures, including EVM votes, postal ballots and home voting. This provisional voting percentage may be revised once service votes are added.

About 78.27 per cent of polling was recorded at polling stations by voters who turned up in person. 2,12,43,942 voters exercised their franchise in the state, while 53,984 service voters remain to be accounted for. Kunnamangalam constituency recorded the highest voter turnout at 84.83 per cent, while Ranni recorded the lowest at 68.99 per cent

The Election Commission will publish the final figures in its index card within 48 hours of counting. He said there was no undue delay and that the Commission had acted with "maximum possible speed" while ensuring transparency. —*PTI*

Ratan U Kelkar —*PTI*

Union Home Minister Amit Shah during a public meeting ahead of the West Bengal Assembly election in Bolpur in West Bengal on Monday—*PTI*

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee during a voter outreach programme in Bankura Sadar Town in West Bengal on Monday —*PTI*

Bengal will reply to bombs with votes: Shah

BIRBHUM/RANIGANJ, 13 APRIL

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday said the people of West Bengal will reply to bombs and bullets with votes, and stressed that the BJP would teach syndicate and cut money promoters a lesson if the voters bid adieu to the TMC government in the coming assembly polls.

Addressing poll rallies in Mayureshwar and Khayrasole areas of Birbhum district and in Paschim Bardhaman's Raniganj, Shah said the writing is on the wall. The people of Bengal have decided to say "Ta Ta Bye Bye" to TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee, he said.

The home minister said that after 5 May, a day after counting of votes, saffron party workers will drag torturers of BJP workers out of the netherworld and bring them to justice.

Shah also accused Mamata Banerjee of trying to "terrorise" the state's majority community. He called the expelled TMC leader Humayun Kabir Mamata Banerjee's 'stooge' who wants to Babri Masjid in Bengal. But the BJP will never allow it, he asserted.

He lashed out at the TMC for allegedly indulging in scams and claimed the party embezzled money to the tune of Rs 5,000 crore.

'FIGHTING FOR PEOPLE', SAYS DIDI

Meanwhile, addressing a rally in Suri in Birbhum district, the TMC supremo said she is fighting a lonely battle for the people against 19 NDA ruled states and Centre.

She sserted that the BJP won't be able to win the West Bengal elections using forces from Delhi. She claimed the TMC would secure 226 seats in the coming polls. She alleged that the BJP was intimidating and threatening people to secure votes and dared the party to act against her.

Banerjee termed Prime Minister Narendra Modi an outsider and asked him to "Handle Delhi first, then think about West Bengal." —*PTI*

CONG MOVES SC AGAINST CANCELLATION OF GOA'S PONDA BYPOLL

PANAJI, 13 APRIL

The Congress has approached the Supreme Court against the cancellation of the Ponda Assembly by-election in Goa, Girish Chodankar said on Monday.

Dr Ketan Bhatikar, who was the Opposition party's candidate IN Ponda, filed a Special Leave Petition in the Supreme Court to challenge the Bombay Hc's order which cancelled the by-poll, CWC member Chodankar said.

The by-poll, necessitated by the death of sitting BJP MLA Ravi Naik on 15 October 2025, was scheduled on 9 April.

The Bombay High Court's Goa bench quashed the ECI's notification for the by-election on 8 April, citing violation of the Representation of the People Act, as the legislature's term is set to expire in less than a year. —*PTI*

- The by-poll, necessitated by the death of sitting BJP MLA Ravi Naik on 15 October 2025, was scheduled on 9 April.

'TMC wrecked helipad ahead of Rahul's rally'

KOLKATA, 13 APRIL

The Congress on Monday alleged that a helipad being prepared for party leader **Rahul Gandhi**'s rally at Raiganj in West Bengal's Uttar Dinajpur district on 14 April was vandalised by TMC workers and lodged a police complaint in this regard.

The TMC rejected the charge and claimed that the Congress itself had done it to malign the ruling party.

Repair work for the helipad is underway on a war footing to ensure that Gandhi's rally, scheduled to be held in the Stadium Ground proceeds as planned.

Senior Congress leader and Raignj candidate Mohit Sengupta alleged that the incident was a deliberate attempt to disrupt the visit.

The Congress leader said the party has taken up the matter with the administration and demanded immediate action

The leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha is scheduled to address the public meeting in support of Sengupta.

The helipad had earlier been constructed for a rally addressed by state Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

Uttar Dinajpur district Congress general secretary Tushar Guha alleged that despite being granted permission by the Election Commission to use the helipad, it was demolished by TMC. Gandhi will address poll rallies in Malda and Murshidabad districts. —*PTI*

Assam moves SC against Khera's anticipatory bail

GUWAHATI, 13 APRIL

The Assam government has moved the Supreme Court against the Telangana High Court order granting one-week transit anticipatory bail to Congress leader Pawan Khera in a case registered against him for levelling allegations against Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's wife.

The petition was filed on Sunday through advocate Shuvodeep Roy and is likely to be taken up for hearing this week.

On 10 April, the high court granted one-week transit anticipatory bail to Khera. The high court gave him a week's time to file an application before the court concerned and granted him relief with certain conditions.

Among the conditions were that he shall be released on bail in the event of arrest on his executing a personal bond for Rs 1 lakh with two sureties for the like sum each and shall cooperate with the investigation.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said his party stands with the leader and "will not be intimidated", after the Assam government moved the Supreme Court. —*PTI*

LIKELY OBC OR DALIT

BJP to elect its first CM in Bihar on Tuesday

PATNA, 13 APRIL

BJP leaders in Bihar on Monday said that the name of the party's "first Chief Minister" in the state will be known on Tuesday, with Union minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan likely to facilitate the power transition.

Chouhan, the 'central observer' for the election of the new legislature party leader, will be visiting the state on a day when JD(U) president Nitish Kumar is expected to put in his papers.

Kumar, who was sworn in as a Rajya Sabha MP recently, is expected to visit Raj Bhavan to tender his resignation immediately after his last cabinet meeting.

In the 243-strong Bihar assembly, the NDA enjoys 202 seats, of which the BJP has 89 seats, followed by the JD(U)'s 85, while smaller partners LJP(RV), HAM and RLM make up for the rest.

Speculations are rife that Samrat Choudhary, a deputy chief minister who holds the crucial Home portfolio, and whom Union Home Minister Amit Shah had famously promised to make "a big man", was the front-runner.

Choudhary's detractors, said he is not a Sangh Parivar man, having spent nearly two decades the RJD and JD(U).

The name of Nityanand Rai, the Union Minister of State for Home is also doing the rounds. He headed the Bihar BJP until being inducted in the Union cabinet in 2019.

Chief Minister "will most likely be an OBC or a Dalit," sources said. —*PTI*

Frontrunners for Bihar Chief Minister's post, Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai and Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Chouhan —*x*

Sonia terms delimitation 'assault' on Constitution

NEW DELHI, 13 APRIL

Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi on Monday asserted the real issue with the government's move to bring bills in a special sitting of Parliament this week is delimitation, not women's reservation, and claimed that the delimitation proposal is "extremely dangerous" as well as an "assault" on the Constitution itself.

She stressed that any delimitation involving an increase of the strength of the Lok Sabha must be politically, and not just arithmetically, equitable.

She also alleged that Prime Minister Modi's real intention now is to "delay and derail" the caste census.

Modi is appealing to opposition parties to support bills that the government wants to "bulldoze" through Parliament in a "special session" when the election campaign in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal IS at its peak, she said.

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi said she has written about how the real concern in the women's reservation issue is the risks posed by the "rushed delimitation." Meanwhile, the Congress issued a whip to all its Lok Sabha MPs to be present in the House for the special sitting of Parliament regarding the women's reservation bill. — *PTI*

- She stressed that any delimitation involving an increase of the strength of the Lok Sabha must be politically, and not just arithmetically, equitable.

Rajasthan courts, Assembly get bomb threats

JAIPUR, 13 APRIL

The Rajasthan Assembly, High Court, and Sessions Court building had received bomb threat emails on Monday. However, officials stated that nothing suspicious was found after security checks were conducted. The threat to the sessions court was received via an email sent to its official ID, following which the court administration alerted the police control room and senior officials. Authorities evacuated the premises and launched searches, police said. The High Court has received similar bomb threats many times in recent times. However, no one has been arrested by the police so far. —*PTI*

Sikkim: 158 vehicles, drivers rescued in Lachen

GANGTOK, 13 APRIL

Officials reported on Monday that 158 drivers of tourist and private vehicles, stranded in Lachen, North Sikkim, following a road breach, have been rescued along with their vehicles. A total of 1,321 tourists were rescued on 9 April using a footbridge constructed on-site following a road breach at Taram Chu, along the Chungthang-Lachen axis, on 5 April. The drivers and the vehicles, which were left stranded, were evacuated through the Dongkya La pass on Sunday, routing vehicles through Zero Point, Yumthang, Lachung, and onward to Mangan and Gangtok. The few remaining stranded drivers will be evacuated soon, the officials confirmed. —*PTI*

Shots fired near ULFA(I) chief Baruah's house

DIBRUGARH, 13 APRIL

The family of ULFA(I) chief Paresh Baruah claimed on Monday that shots were fired near his paternal home in Assam's Dibrugarh district. Paresh's brother, Bimal Baruah, reported that two rounds of blank fire were heard near the house in Jerai Gaon after midnight, although nothing was captured on CCTV. The incident occurred days after the return of Arunodoi Dohotia, a former close aide of Paresh, who had surrendered months earlier and came back from militant camps in Myanmar to his home in the area just two days . Paresh's ULFA(I) is the only outfit that is yet to come for talks. Police have started an investigation.—*PTI*

Mathura boat capsize death toll climbs to 15

MATHURA, 13 APRIL

The death toll from Friday's boat capsizing near Kesi Ghat in Vrindavan has risen to 15, following the recovery of two more bodies on Monday. The vessel, carrying over three dozen tourists sank after striking a floating pontoon drum. SIP Suresh Chandra Rawat said a woman's body was found at Bangali Ghat in Mathura; she was identified as Monika. The second body, identified as Yash alias Yuvraj Bhalla, was found near Devaraha Baba Ghat. In a video recorded minutes before Friday's accident, he is seen playing a dhol alongside devotees singing hymns. The body of Pankaj Malhotra, 40, remains to be recovered, Rawat said.—*PTI*

Iranian crude returns to India after seven years

NEW DELHI, 13 APRIL

Two supertankers carrying Iranian crude arrived at Indian ports on both the east and west coasts, marking the first such deliveries in nearly seven years.

Felicity, a very large crude carrier operated by the National Iranian Tanker Company, anchored off Sikka on Gujarat's coast late Sunday, carrying around 2 million barrels loaded at Kharg Island in mid-March.

A second tanker, Jaya, moored near Paradip on Odisha's coast around the same time. It is transporting a similar volume of crude, taken from Kharg Island in late February, before the US and Israel launched strikes against Iran.

The one-month exemption permitted the sale of Iranian oil already in transit, aimed at easing global supply disruptions.

However, after peace talks collapsed, the US announced a blockade of Iranian ports.

The one-month exemption permitted the sale of Iranian oil already in transit, to ease global supply disruptions —*PTI*

The buyers of the cargoes reaching Indian coasts have not been formally disclosed.

Paradip is primarily operated by the Indian Oil Corporation, which has confirmed purchasing at least one Iranian shipment under the waiver. Sikka, meanwhile, is a key crude handling hub for Reliance Industries and Bharat Petroleum Corporation, both of which maintain infrastructure in the region.

Late last month, the tanker Ping Shun, carrying about 600,000 barrels of Iranian crude, was bound for Vadinar in Gujarat but was diverted to China mid-voyage due to payment issues.

Had it reached Vadinar, the oil would have been the first Iranian crude to reach Indian shores in seven years.

Historically, India was a major buyer of Iranian crude, importing light and heavy grades due to strong refinery compatibility. — *PTI*

Centre, ECI get notice on biometrics-based voting

SC says plea won't be considered for polls underway

NEW DELHI, 13 APRIL

The Supreme Court sought responses from the Centre, the Election Commission and others on Monday on a plea seeking to implement finger and iris biometric identification system at polling stations to prevent fraudulent voting.

Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi made it clear that the request sought in the petition can't be considered for the current state Assembly elections in some states.

"However, whether the policy can be followed for the next parliamentary election and/or state assembly elections needs to be examined. Issue notice," the bench said.

The SC issued notice to the Centre, the poll panel and several other states seeking their responses on the plea filed by advocate Ashwini Upadhyay.

Upadhyay, who appeared in person, told the bench that the request sought in the plea would prevent proxy voting.

The bench observed that it would require major changes and huge financial burden.

The plea said the ECI, by using powers under Article 324, can implement fingerprint and iris based authentication to eliminate, impersonation and duplicate voting.

The plea said that adoption of biometric verification would ensure that only genuine electors can vote. "The harm done to citizens is extremely huge as impersonation affects the electoral process," it submitted.

It said that now voter identification is based on voter ID cards and manual verification, which are susceptible to misuse due to old photographs, clerical errors, and a lack of real-time validation. — *PTI*

Centre gets notice on digital personal data protection law

The Supreme Court sought the response of the Centre on Monday on a PIL challenging the provisions of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, that allegedly diluted transparency under the 2005 RTI. Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Bagchi sought responses from the Union Ministry of Personnel and the Ministry of Law after taking note of the submissions of advocate Divan appearing for the PIL petitioners. The PIL was filed by 'Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan' along with activists Aruna Roy, Nikhil Dey and Shankar Rawat. The petitioners urged the court to restore the original Section 8(1)(j) of the RTI Act, along with its proviso, with retrospective effect from 13 November 2025. —*PTI*

SC refuses to quash FIR against Lalu

The SC refused to quash a CBI FIR in the land-for-jobs case involving Lalu Prasad Yadav and his family. Justices MM Sundresh and N Kotiswar Singh, however, granted exemption to Lalu from appearance in court. The SC allowed Lalu to raise the issue of the applicability of Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act in the case during the trial. —*PTI*

SC issues notice to Centre, others on MSP

The Supreme Court on Monday sought the responses of the Centre and others on a plea to accord weightage to the states' proposal on the exact cost of cultivation while fixing minimum support price (MSP). Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi issued notices to the Centre and others, including the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices. —*PTI*

SC seeks responses of Centre, states, UTs on RTE

NEW DELHI, 13 APRIL

The Supreme Court sought the responses of the Centre, states and union territories on a PIL seeking implementation of the RTE law which mandates free, compulsory education for children aged 6 to 14.

Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi took note of the submissions of a lawyer, representing PIL petitioner Haripriya Patel, who also sought implementation of the new education policy in all states and UTs.

At the outset, the lawyer said one of the key issues was the enforceability of pre-primary education for children across the country.

Besides, he also raised the issue of implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which has been updated from time to time.

The NEP replaces the 10+2 system with a 5+3+3+4 model (ages 3–18), introduces vocational training from Grade 6, and emphasises AI, coding, and multi-lingualism.

The PIL also sought implementation of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009.

This law mandates free, compulsory education for children aged 6 to 14 and ensures foundational education in a neighbourhood school and mandates that private schools reserve 25 per cent of seats for the poor. — *PTI*

JAMMING PROTEST

Vehicles remain stuck on the road as workers protest demanding a hike in wages at Noida in Uttar Pradesh on Monday —*PTI*

Labour protest halts traffic on Delhi-Noida border

NEW DELHI, 13 APRIL

- The protest led to congestion on roads connecting Delhi and Noida, including NH 9. Long queues of vehicles were seen stretching several kilometres, with many people stranded on the road for hours

The public faced a harrowing morning on Monday as a massive traffic jam brought traffic to a near standstill on the Delhi-Noida border after a protest by a labour union demanding a salary hike.

The protest, which began early in the day, led to congestion on key roads connecting Delhi and Noida, including NH 9.

Long queues of vehicles were seen stretching several kilometres, with many people stranded for hours.

A police source said that members of the labour union from Uttar Pradesh were staging a demonstration, blocking portions of the road.

"The Delhi Police and the Noida Police were deployed to manage the situation, but the heavy volume of vehicles compounded the chaos," the source said.

Frustrated commuters took to X, urging authorities to clear the roads. Many complained of being stuck in traffic despite starting early to avoid peak-hour congestion.

An employee of a private company said she left her home at around 7:30 am but remained stuck in traffic for over an hour.

Authorities said efforts were underway to clear the congestion and restore traffic flow as soon as possible. — *PTI*

The accident occurred at 10.45 am on the Raita Bridge in the Govili village of Murbad in Maharashtra's Thane district—*PTI*

11 killed, 2 injured as van hits cement mixer

THANE, 13 APRIL

Eleven people were killed and two were severely injured when a van collided with a cement mixer on a bridge in Maharashtra's Thane district on Monday, police said.

The crash occurred at around 10.45 am on the Raita Bridge in the Govili village of Murbad, an official from the district rural police said.

The van heading to Murbad from Kalyan collided head-on with a cement mixer, he said.

At least 11 occupants of the van died, and two injured have been shifted to the central hospital at Ulhasnagar, Murbad tehsildar Abhijit Deshmukh said.

Six of the victims have been identified, and the process of identifying the others is underway. The dead included eight men and three women, he said. — *PTI*

Severe heatwave alert in Andhra

AMARAVATI, 13 APRIL

The APSDMA has warned of severe heat waves in several parts of Andhra Pradesh on Monday.

The Andhra Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority (APSDMA) said severe heat waves are likely in 51 mandals and moderate ones in 49 mandals on Monday, mainly in north coastal districts. High temperatures are expected in coastal and Rayalaseema regions too.

On Monday, severe heat waves are likely in Srikakulam (9 mandals), Vizianagaram (18), Parvathipuram Manyam (15), Alluri (1), Polavaram (3), Anakapalli (3) and Eluru (2), while heatwaves are expected in Srikakulam (2 mandals), Vizianagaram (5), Alluri (4), Polavaram (9), Anakapalli (5), Kakinada (5), East Godavari (9), Eluru (4), NTR (3), Palnadu (2) and Nandyal (1).

On Sunday, the maximum temperature was 43.8 degrees Celsius in Pottipadu in Kadapa district, 43.1 degrees in Varadaiahpalem in Tirupati district, 42.9 degrees in Nandyal, and 42.3 degrees in Terannapalle in Anantapur district. The APSDMA has advised people to avoid exposure to sunlight and to consume sufficient water. — *PTI*

'Drunk' doctor found using flip number plates

HYDERABAD, 13 APRIL

A 30-year-old doctor, who was caught here for allegedly driving his high-end car in an "inebriated" state, was found using two different registration numbers through a flip number plate installed on the vehicle, police said on Monday.

The matter came to light on 10 April after the man was found driving "drunk" during a check in Jubilee Hills. The car which was seized was driven to a police station and a constable accidentally pressed a button near the driver's seat.

After the button was pressed, the police noticed the number plate on the car flip displaying two different registration numbers, one a Delhi registration and the other Telangana.

The doctor had purchased the car in Delhi but had not changed its registration, an official said, adding that he bought the flip number plate system that could change the car's number plates online and had installed it two years ago.

During investigation it was found that a similar car was registered with a Telangana number and that it belonged to a relative of the doctor. Police said they will question the technician too.

Police suspect that the doctor was trying to evade road tax. — *PTI*

Maoist with Rs 5 lakh bounty killed in Ch'garh

KANKER, 13 APRIL

A woman Maoist carrying a reward of Rs 5 lakh was killed in an encounter with security forces in Chhattisgarh's Kanker district on Monday, police said.

The deceased, identified as Rupi, was an area committee member of the Maoists and is believed to be the last senior Telugu cadre active in Chhattisgarh's Bastar region, which comprises seven districts, including Kanker, they said. The face-off comes 12 days after the government declared Chhattisgarh free of armed Maoists on 31 March.

IGP Sundarraj P, said the government has been continuously appealing to Maoists to surrender and avail rehabilitation benefits, leading to a significant number opting to return to the mainstream.

The encounter broke out in the morning at a forest near Machpalli village, when a security team was out on an anti-Naxalite operation based on specific intelligence inputs, Kanker SP Nikhil Rakhecha said. Rupi's body was recovered from the spot along with a pistol, explosives and other materials, he said, adding that a search was underway in the area.

Rupi was the wife of Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee member Vijay Reddy, who was killed in an encounter last year. — *PTI*

RELIGION & POLITICS

Won't tolerate 'insults': Keralam Bishop

KOTTAYAM, 13 APRIL

A prominent Catholic bishop in Kerala has asserted that the Church would not ignore 'insults' and that nobody can ask its clergy to be neutral always.

Pala Bishop Mar Joseph Kallarangatt made the remarks during a recent address.

Stating that neither bishops nor priests can be mute spectators at all times, he said the Church would not tolerate remarks that cross decency or denigrates its clergy.

His remarks come in the backdrop of a controversy triggered by critical comments made by BJP leaders PC George and his son Shone George against certain bishops and the Church-backed Malayalam daily Deepika, over its reported stance favouring the UDF before the 9 April Assembly polls.

He said that while expressing opinions, care must be taken to respect the sentiments of believers.

At the same time, he welcomed the increasing participation of Church members in politics.

Meanwhile, BJP state vice-president KS Radhakrishnan described the verbal spat as a "personal rift" between certain leaders and sections of the Church.

"If Church heads speak politics and urge people to vote for a particular front, it is natural for other parties to criticise them. They cannot expect the protection of priesthood after speaking politics," he told a television channel.

He also said the BJP had adopted a pro-Christian approach during the Assembly polls, but would give due priority to addressing its Hindu vote base. He also said that the BJP would not compromise on religious conversions. — *PTI*

J&K man ferrying cattle attacked, probe ordered

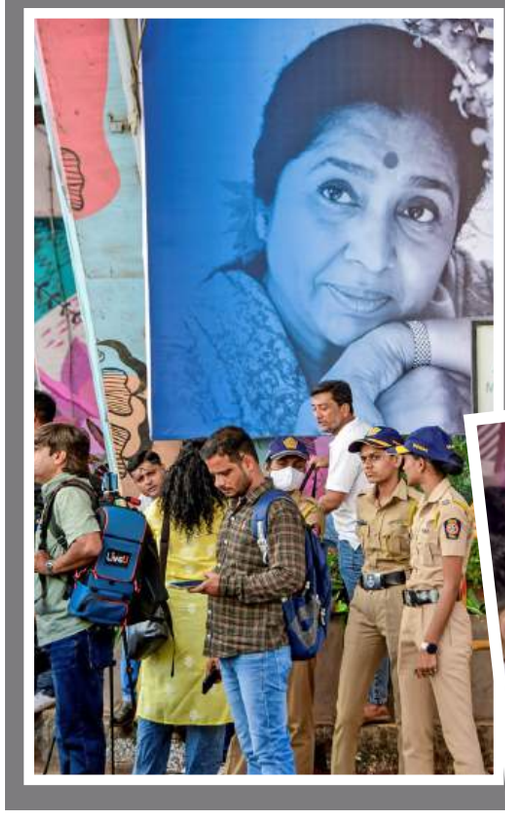
BANIHAL/JAMMU, 13 APRIL

A special investigation team (SIT) has been set up to probe the disappearance of a man who was ferrying cattle and is believed to have fallen into a stream in J&K's Ramban district after being allegedly chased and assaulted by some people, officials said on Monday.

Four suspects have also been arrested in connection with the case, as hundreds of locals, including relatives of the missing person, blocked the Jammu-Srinagar NH near the scene of the incident at Makarkoot. The four arrested are Surjeet Singh, Sandeep Singh, Digvijay Singh and Keval Singh, Banihal SDPO Surinder Singh said, adding a case has been registered.

Attempts were on to pacify the protesters and open the NH section. Authorities have also reduced internet speeds in Banihal and Ramsoo.

Meanwhile, the NDRF joined the search for the missing Tanveer Ahmad Chopan. Locals said he was travelling from Jammu to his village, ferrying a cow and two calves in a pick-up truck. — *PTI*



FANS BID GOODBYE

From left (in clockwise): People gather outside legendary playback singer Asha Bhosle's Mumbai residence; Students pay a tribute to Asha, in Mirzapur; Bollywood actress Tabu consoles Asha's granddaughter Zanai Bhosle —*PTI*

Razor-thin margins, SIR to decide who forms WB govt

West Bengal's 2026 election may be decided not by the arithmetic of 294 seats that dominate campaign speeches, but by around 65-70 constituencies where victory and defeat are separated by little more than a few booths and where the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls has suddenly redrawn the battlefield.

Crucial among those are seats such as Nandigram to Bhabanipur, and regions like the Matua belt of North 24 Parganas and the minority-heavy stretches of Murshidabad and Malda, where the assembly-wise lead in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls was often no more than 8,000 to 15,000 votes. Several MLAs had scraped through in 2021 in these areas by less than 1,000-8,000 votes, and now, thousands of names have disappeared from the rolls.

This is why, beneath Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's claim that the TMC will return with a bigger mandate than the 215 seats it won in 2021, and Union Home Minister Amit Shah's assertion that the BJP will cross 170 seats from its present tally of 77, both parties are quietly fighting a grimmer battle — one booth, one deleted voter and one marginal constituency at a time.

More than 90.83 lakh names have been deleted across West Bengal till 7 April, nearly 11.85 per cent of the electorate identified last October. Of those, 27.16 lakh deletions came from the "under adjudication" category alone.

The epicentre lies in nearly 70 seats across 11 districts. 25 are in Kolkata and the adjoining belt of North 24 Parganas, Howrah and Hooghly. The rest are in Murshidabad, Malda, Bankura, Purulia, the two Bardhamans and the two Medinipurs.

More than 90.83 lakh names have been deleted across West Bengal till 7 April, with 27.16 lakh names deleted 'under adjudication' category —*PTI*

North 24 Parganas alone has 13 such closely fought seats, Murshidabad 10, Bankura-Purulia nine, Howrah-Hooghly eight and the twin Medinipurs and Bardhamans another eight.

The 2021 election showed how narrow the divide had become. Of the 57 seats decided by 8,000 votes or less, the TMC won 29 and the BJP 28. In the 19 seats where the margin was below 3,000, the BJP won 12 and the TMC seven.

Kulti in Paschim Bardhaman was won by the BJP by just 679 votes. Dantan by 623, Ghatal by 966, Bankura by 1,468, and Nandigram, where Suvendu Adhikari defeated Mamata Banerjee, by 1,956.

In North 24 Parganas and Nadia, where the BJP has tried to build a Hindu refugee-Matua coalition around the citizenship issue, the mismatch between margins and deletions is even starker.

Bongaon South, which the BJP won by around 2,000 votes, has seen nearly 7,000 names deleted. Kalyani, another BJP-held seat won by roughly 2,000 votes, witnessed around 9,000 deletions.

In North 24 Parganas, more than 55 per cent of the names kept under scrutiny were eventually deleted. In Nadia, the figure was nearly 78 per cent.

Murshidabad, one of the TMC's strongest districts, saw the sharpest under-adjudication deletions — 4.55 lakh names. Together with earlier deletions, the district has lost nearly 7.49 lakh voters.

Of the metropolis's 16 assembly seats, only Beleghata and Bhabanipur are estimated to have recorded SIR deletions lower than the previous victory margin. In every other constituency, deleted names exceed the winning margin.

One of the TMC's safest bastions, Bhabanipur, saw 51,005 names deleted, including 3,893 removed after being kept in the "under consideration" category. Yet, even there, the deletions remain below the scale of the TMC's victories. The party won the seat by around 29,000 votes in 2021, and Mamata Banerjee later retained it in the bypoll with a margin of nearly 58,000.

Dinhata perhaps remains the most dramatic anecdote of West Bengal's volatility. BJP's Nisith Pramanik beat TMC's Udayan Guha there by only 57 votes in 2021. Months later, after a bypoll, Guha returned with a margin of 1.64 lakh.

Before the adjudication process began, there were around 111 assembly segments where the number of voters under scrutiny exceeded the winning margin of the 2024 Lok Sabha polls in the segments. Even after the process, deleted voters outnumber the Lok Sabha victory margin in at least 120 assembly seats.

The scale of the churn becomes clearer in 44 assembly seats where the number of names struck off the rolls is greater than the margin by which the winner had prevailed in 2021.

The TMC holds 24 of these seats and the BJP 20, underlining that neither side is insulated from the impact of the revision. The BJP-held list includes emblematic constituencies such as Nandigram and Gaighata.

The cluster is spread across some of the state's most politically sensitive districts. Purba and Paschim Bardhaman and Nadia account for five such seats each. North 24 Parganas and Paschim Medinipur have four each, while Cooch Behar, Dakshin Dinajpur and Murshidabad have three each. Purba Medinipur and Howrah account for two each.

In effect, the faultline runs through both the BJP's expanding belt in northern and western Bengal and the TMC's entrenched strongholds elsewhere, making the impact of the deletions impossible for either camp to ignore.

Based on 2021 turnout patterns, a one per cent swing in vote share could flip at least 15 of these seats. A two per cent shift could alter more than 20. —*PTI*

SALAR سالار

'Transgender law must retain self-identification'

The recently passed Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Act, 2026, should have included provisions to protect transgender individuals who do not wish to be part of any traditional eunuch community, said Maya Thakur, the transgender icon of Himachal Pradesh's Solan election department.

Thakur, a transgender woman who hails from Kothi village in Solan, said identification of transgender individuals should be done based on their feelings, not on the basis of genitals, by the medical board.

The measure amends the 2019 law, replacing self-identification with a "medical board" model. It also mandates reporting surgeries to district authorities and excludes those with different self-perceived sexual orientations.

"I was born as a male but identified myself as a woman. My identity is that of a transgender woman, we are unisex and not eunuchs," she told PTI and added, "We live in an independent country and every citizen has the right to live the way he or she wants".

She called for an amendment to the recently passed law to add self-identification.

"While verification is indeed necessary, it should be conducted through government-authorised officials rather than under pressure from any specific community, starting with eunuchs, who do not allow medical examination because they earn more as eunuchs," she said.

Penning down some suggestions in a letter addressed to the Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, she said that the practice of eunuchs forcefully taking babies should be stopped.

"Independent individuals are harassed under the pretext of determining whether they are 'real' or 'fake' transgender persons, which adversely affects their mental peace and professional careers. The Act must include provisions that provide protection to those transgender individuals who do not wish to be part of a specific Dera or 'traditional community eunuchs," she added.

The Act provides penalties for physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse of transgender persons. However, the amendments make obtaining legal recognition more difficult, she said.

There are about 35 people belonging to the third gender in Himachal Pradesh.

Drawing the government's attention to the segment of the transgender community that seeks to establish its identity outside of the traditional 'Kinnar culture' by pursuing respectable employment, she said that educated transgender individuals who aspire to be self-reliant often face intimidation and pressure from traditional eunuch communities.

"We must be granted the right to work within the social mainstream, retaining our individual identities, without any interference from external communities", she said, adding that the societal and employer-held perception that "every transgender person is a eunuch constitutes the greatest obstacle to our professional advancement". The definition of the term 'Transgender' within the law must be sufficiently clear to ensure that a working individual is evaluated based on their professional qualifications, rather than solely on their traditional identity, she said.

Thakur, who earlier worked at an NGO in Delhi, advocates for lessons on transgender individuals in educational curriculum on the lines of countries like Canada, which provides for the right to an educational environment free from discrimination and harassment and use of bathrooms that correspond with their gender identity.

Her remarks come just days after the law, which provides graded punishment for bodily harm to transgender persons, received the assent of President Draupadi Murmu. Opposition had slammed the Act for excluding self-determined gender identities.

An authority has been established to determine whether a person is transgender, a provision that also faced backlash from the opposition.

According to a law ministry notification dated 30 March, the amended law will come into effect on a date appointed by the Central Government through a notification in the official gazette. —*PTI*

The Transgender Persons Amendment Act provides penalties for physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse of transgender people, said trans icon Maya Takur —*PTI*

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Ousted to Bangladesh, 6 Murshidabad men vote to prove citizenship

- The six men had travelled to Maharashtra for work and returned carrying not only trauma but also a new fear — that even after coming home, they would have to prove they belonged to the country.

For years, elections for Minarul Sheikh were about the familiar litany of roads, jobs, ration and the hope that something might change.

This time, standing outside his mud-walled house at Beldanga in West Bengal's Murshidabad district, with a plastic folder containing documents tucked under his arm, the 34-year-old said he would walk to the polling booth not merely to vote, but to take back what was "snatched" from him — the right to belong.

"Last year, they threw me into another country, saying I was not Indian. This vote is my answer," Sheikh said, clutching the voter slip that he got back after eight months, four hearings and repeated visits to the block office.

Minarul is among six migrant workers from Murshidabad, who were picked up in Maharashtra in June last year, branded Bangladeshis, pushed across the border and briefly lodged in Bangladesh before being brought back after the West Bengal Police established their citizenship.

The six men had travelled to Maharashtra for work and returned carrying not only trauma but also a new fear — that even after coming home, they would have to prove they belonged to the country.

In villages across Beldanga and Hariharpara, this fear now hangs over the assembly election campaign.

For many around them, this election is about change, anger against the ruling party, or lack of jobs. For these six families, it has become an election about identity.

This anxiety is sharper in Muslim-majority Murshidabad, where the TMC had swept most of the district's 22 seats in 2021. According to the revised electoral rolls, 7.48 lakh names have been deleted from the district, triggering apprehension across villages where many migrant families fear that they would be treated as outsiders.

"I am not voting for rice, money or promises. I am voting to show that I am an Indian and nobody can throw me out again," said Mahboob Sheikh, 36, from Hariharpara. Mahboob said when he went to check the draft electoral roll in January, his name was there, but the name of one of his family members had disappeared.

"We stood in line three times. They asked for Aadhaar, voter card, land paper, everything. We submitted all papers. If we had all this, why were we called Bangladeshis in the first place?" he said.

According to the revised electoral rolls, 7.48 lakh names have been deleted from the district, triggering apprehension across villages where many migrant families fear that they would be treated as outsiders —*PTI*

A woman family member, sitting beside him, broke down. "When he was taken away, we wondered whether we would again see him or not. I want to vote so that no one can question us again."

Nazimuddin Mondal of Hariharpara still keeps the 300 Bangladeshi Taka that was given to him before being pushed across the border.

Nazimuddin said his name made it to the voters' list after repeated hearings, but that of his younger brother has still not been restored.

"Officials say there is some discrepancy. We have the same house and papers. Then why is one brother Indian and the other missing from the list?" he asked.

Shamim Khan, another of the six, said the coming polls have left him angrier than excited.

His mother Ruksana Begum said the family still remembers the night police allegedly barged into their room in Maharashtra.

Nizamuddin Sheikh, who spent two days in a Bangladeshi detention camp before returning, said he has stopped going outside West Bengal for work.

"I used to think poverty was the biggest problem. Now I know losing your identity is worse," he said.

Another worker, Jamaluddin Sk, said he had voted in every election since turning 18, but this will be the first time he will enter the booth carrying all his documents.

Senior TMC leader and MP Abu Taher alleged that the incident showed how "BJP governments treat Bengali-speaking Muslims as suspects".

Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said the case exposed "the collapse of institutions".

The BJP rejected the charge, saying infiltration remains a major concern in Bengal and that no genuine citizen would be harassed. "If there were mistakes, these should be corrected. But the larger issue of infiltration cannot be brushed aside. The TMC is trying to politicise isolated incidents," a district party leader said.

Back in Beldanga, Minarul says he no longer talks about politics with neighbours. He only speaks on 23 April, the first phase polling day in West Bengal.

He has kept every document- Aadhaar, PAN, voter card, land deed and the photocopy of the application that restored his name to the rolls- wrapped in a polythene packet in his cupboard.

Across the riverine belt of Murshidabad, where migration to states in north and south India is common, the story of the six men has travelled from tea stalls to mosque courtyards. In several villages, residents say they now check the electoral rolls more carefully than before, and are fearful that a missing name can become the first step towards being marked as an outsider.

At Hariharpara, neighbours gathered around Mahboob's house as he displayed the fresh voter slip he received last week. There was no celebration, only relief.

For them, the ballot is no longer a choice between parties but a certificate of belonging. —*PTI*

2 held as Altman's home attacked for 2nd time in a week

SAN FRANCISCO, 13 APRIL

OpenAI CEO Sam Altman's San Francisco home was targeted by two individuals in a car, who allegedly fired shots outside his residence on Sunday. The San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) arrested Amanda Tom, 25, and Muhamad Tarik Hussein, 23, and recovered three firearms from them. Police arrested the two men without incident at a residence on Taylor Street, where officers also reportedly recovered three firearms during a search. According to the police report, both suspects were booked on charges related to negligent discharge of a firearm. This incident is the second reported attack on Altman's home. Two days earlier, Daniel Alejandro Moreno-Gama, 20, allegedly threw a Molotov cocktail at the gate of his residence. *—AGENCIES*

Peru poll results delayed after voting extension

LIMA, 13 APRIL

Peruvian voters will have to wait until at least Monday for the outcome of Sunday's presidential election. This delay follows a poll process mired with logistical issues that left thousands in the country and abroad unable to cast ballots. Due to these logistical issues, electoral authorities extended voting to Monday for over 52,000 residents in Lima, Peru. The extension—announced after vote counting began Sunday evening—also applies to Peruvian voters registered in Orlando, Florida, and Paterson, New Jersey. Voting is mandatory for Peruvians from the ages of 18 to 70. Failure to do so invites a fine of up to USD 32. Authorities initially reported 63,300 people could vote on Monday, but later lowered the figure. *—PTI*

US strikes kill 5 on 'drug boat' in the Pacific

WASHINGTON, 13 APRIL

The US military announced on Sunday that it blew up two boats allegedly smuggling drugs via the eastern Pacific Ocean, killing a total of five people and leaving one survivor. The attacks on Saturday bring the number of people who have been killed in boat strikes by the US military to at least 168 since the Trump administration began targeting those it calls "narcoterrorists" in early September. While the Trump administration continues its campaign against alleged traffickers in Latin America, it is also preparing a naval blockade of Iranian ports. The military provided no evidence that the vessel was carrying drugs. Videos on X showed small boats crossing the water before being engulfed in explosions. *—PTI*

WIKIPEDIA

Britney Spears enters rehab after DUI arrest

LOS ANGELES, 13 APRIL

Britney Spears, the "Princess of Pop," has voluntarily entered a substance abuse treatment facility, her representative told AP, a month after her arrest on suspicion of DUI involving alcohol and drugs. On 5 March, California Highway Patrol officers received a report that a BMW was driving erratically in Ventura County near the Los Angeles County line. Spears failed field sobriety tests and was arrested on suspicion of DUI involving alcohol and drugs, authorities said. On 23 March, investigators transferred the case to the Ventura County District Attorney's Office, which aims to decide on charges against Spears before her 4 May court date. Spears has mostly set aside her music career in the past decade. *—PTI*

Not afraid of you: Pope after Trump calls him 'weak'

Trump launches tirade as Leo criticises war

WASHINGTON, 13 APRIL

US-born Pope Leo XIV said he had "no fear" of Donald Trump after the US President launched an extraordinary broadside criticism against him. Trump said that Pope Leo caters to the "radical Left" and called him "weak" and "terrible".

Pope Leo told press while en route to Algeria that he was not making a direct attack against Trump or anyone else with his general appeal for peace and criticisms of the "delusion of omnipotence" that is fuelling the Iran wars and other conflicts around the world.

Pope Leo suggested that Trump has not understood "what the message of the Gospel is... And I'm sorry to hear that but I will continue on what I believe is the mission of the Church in the world today."

"I will not enter into debate," he added. "The message of the Gospels are clear: Blessed are the peacemakers....I will continue to speak out loudly against war.... Too many innocent people are being killed. And I think someone has to stand up and say there's a better way,"

Trump delivered his attack on Pope Leo on Truth Social on Sunday, after the pontiff grew increasingly critical of the war on Iran, and said that God does not support wars.

"Pope Leo is weak on crime, and terrible for foreign policy," Trump wrote. "I don't want a Pope who thinks it's okay for Iran to have a nuclear weapon.... (or) a Pope who thinks it's terrible that America attacked Venezuela."

The President also said that the Vatican Church installed Leo to "deal with Donald Trump".

He later doubled down and told press "I don't like Pope Leo".

It's not unusual for Popes and Presidents to be at cross purposes, but it's rare for the Pope to directly criticise a US leader. Trump's response is equally uncommon. *—PTI*

US President Donald Trump posted an AI-generated image where he appeared to liken himself to Jesus Christ—*TRUTHSOCIAL @REALDONALDTRUMP*

WEST ASIA WAR

DAY-45

> **Together with the UK, we will organise a conference with those countries prepared to contribute alongside us to a peaceful multinational mission aimed at restoring freedom of navigation in the strait. This strictly defensive mission, separate from the warring parties to the conflict, is intended to be deployed as soon as circumstances permit.**
>
> —Emmanuel Macron, French President

> **We're not supporting the blockade... (because we're) focused on getting the Strait fully open... We're not getting dragged into the war.... because I'm not going to act unless there's a clear, lawful basis and a clear thought-through plan.**
>
> —Keir Starmer, British Prime Minister

> **I was not surprised by the decision to break off the talks in Islamabad. From the very beginning, I didn't get the impression that they were really well prepared**
>
> —Friedrich Merz, German Chancellor

US will be nostalgic for $4-$5 gas: Iran Parl Speaker

Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad-Bagher Ghalibaf said that the US will soon be nostalgic for $4-$5 gas amid the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz. He used a math formula on X to show why the blockade would further spike oil prices: O_BSOH>0 f(f(O))>f(O). O appears to refer to oil prices and BSOH means Blockade of Strait of Hormuz. The equation suggests that if the severity of the Hormuz blockade increases (Delta O_{BSOH}>0), it will produce a compounding, non-linear spike in oil prices (f(f(O))>f(O)), rather than a simple 1-to-1 increase.

If you fight, we fight too: Iran after US' Hormuz blockade

The US CENTCOM has begun enforcing a blockade on the Strait of Hormuz, on Monday *—X @CENTCOM*

WASHINGTON/TEHRAN 13 APRIL

- The US' blockade of the Strait of Hormuz threatens an already fragile ceasefire. US says it will allow ships from all non-Iranian ports to pass, but it is unclear what will happen after the ceasefire ends

Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, who led Tehran during the diplomatic negotiations in Pakistan, addressed US President Donald Trump in a statement on his return to Iran: "If you fight, we will fight."

The status of the ceasefire remains unclear as Trump's blockade on the Strait of Hormuz took effect late on Monday.

However, Iran's Revolutionary Guard said the Strait remained under Iran's "full control" and was open for non-military vessels, but military ones would get a "forceful response," according to Iran's state media.

A chorus of top-ranking Iranian officials also threatened retaliation. Mohsen Rezaei, a military adviser and a former Revolutionary Guard Commander, wrote on X that the country's armed forces had "major untouched levers" to counter a Hormuz blockade.

There is also no word on what will happen once the two-week ceasefire expires on 22 April, provided it lasts that long. Trump has threatened to start bombing ships that exit the Strait, similar to how the US bombed alleged drug boats on international waters near Venezuela and killed over 100 people.

Turkish officials have suggested extending the ceasefire, while Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that "full efforts" were going on to resolve the conflict. But it is unclear if either side will return to the table immediately.

Trump justified his blockade in order stop Iran from policing the Strait and benefiting economically while the rest of the world suffers from its closure.

"At some point, we will reach an all being allowed to go in, all being allowed to go out basis," he said on Truth Social. "But Iran has not allowed that to happen.... This is world extortion."

Notably, marine trackers say over 40 commercial ships have crossed since the start of the ceasefire, down from roughly 100 to 135 vessel passages per day before the war. *—PTI*

Israeli forces storms southern Lebanon town

TEL AVIV, 13 APRIL

Fierce fighting on Monday rocked the strategic southern Lebanese town of Bint Jbeil, as Israeli troops appeared to encircle the area while Hezbollah militants launched rockets and artillery in an effort to push them back.

The town overlooks the UN-mandated Blue Line dividing the two countries over 3.2km away.

The clashes have intensified over the past week, after Iran and the United States agreed to a temporary truce.

While Israel has scaled back its attacks on Beirut after killing 350 people in a series of strikes, it has increased its ground military presence and strikes on southern Lebanon, where it intends to create a "security zone" south of the Litani River, which is 32km north of the border.

Israel said it killed 100 Hezbollah fighters over the past few days in Bint Jbeil, although the Iranian-backed militants didn't immediately acknowledge the losses. Hezbollah said it killed five IDF soldiers, which Israel did not acknowledge.

Hezbollah said that it also attacked Israeli outposts in the occupied Golan Heights.

Lebanese state media reported that Israel's military had encircled the town. Israel has already flattened dozens of towns in Lebanon.

This comes as negotiators as set to meet in Washington on Tuesday for talks.

'BOMB LEBANON'S CIVILIAN INFRA'

Israel's Energy Minister Eli Cohen has called for expanding the country's military strikes on Lebanon to now include civilian infrastructure in Lebanon, arguing that the distinction between the Lebanese government and Hezbollah should no longer be maintained.

He called for strikes on Beirut's airport, seaports, and power stations and said he raised the issue in Israel's Cabinet.

Such strikes are typically considered war crimes. *—Agencies*

Rescuers continue searching for a missing woman and girl at a building destroyed by Israeli strikes on 8 April in Beirut—*PTI*

Maj Gen Gofman appointed as new Mossad Chief

TEL AVIV, 13 APRIL

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has appointed his military secretary, Major General Roman Gofman, as the next Director of the Israeli Institute for Intelligence and Special Operations, Mossad.

The appointment came following approval from the advisory committee on senior appointments.

Netanyahu described him as an "outstanding officer--bold and creative," adding that he had demonstrated "impressive resourcefulness" and an ability to think outside the box, particularly during the ongoing war.

Gofman is set to succeed outgoing David Barnea, whose five-year term as head of Mossad is due to conclude in June. He is set to assume office on 2 July, 2026, for a five-year term. *—ANI*

Vance-led talks helped build goodwill with Iran: Report

US Vice President JD Vance-led talks for peace with Iran may have been unsuccessful, but the 21-hour-long discussions helped build goodwill with Tehran, the Washington Post reported, quoting US officials. The report said that Vance developed a rapport with the Iran's negotiators.

Won't give 70 cents of every dollar to US: Carney

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said that Ottawa will heavily reduce its reliance on the US for military procurement, saying: "The days of Canada's military sending 70 cents of every dollar to the US are over". Carney has already attempted to diversify Canada's trading partners.

Irish PM announces fuel tax cuts to stop protests

Irish PM Micheál Martin said on Sunday that his government will offer new fuel tax cuts amounting to 505 million euros to end protests over soaring gas costs. However, he slammed the farmers and truckers for blocking access to Ireland's only oil refinery over the past six days.

Rescued airmen from Iran are in good shape: Trump

Trump said that the two rescued airmen from Iran are in a good shape "and we're proud of them." They were stranded after Iran downed a F-15E Strike Eagle fighter jet on 3 April, the US' first lost in the war. One of the pilots was rescued the same day, it took two days to rescue the other.

RUSSIA VS EU ELECTION

Orban's 16-yr tenure ends as Hungary elects Peter Magyar

BUDAPEST, 13 APRIL

Hungary's long-serving Prime Minister Viktor Orban has conceded defeat in the parliamentary elections after partial official results indicated a decisive victory for **Peter Magyar** and his Tisza party.

Magyar's victory marks a significant political shift in the country after 16 years of continuous rule by Fidesz.

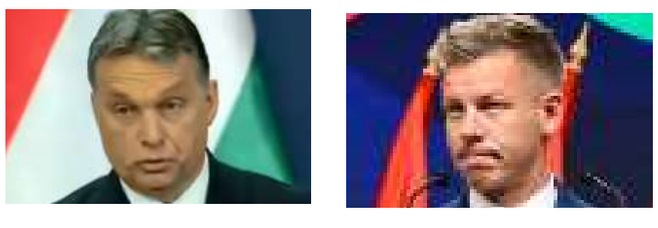
With 97.35 per cent of precincts counted, official results reported by Al Jazeera showed that Magyar's centre-right Tisza party secured 138 seats in the 199-member parliament, winning 53.6 per cent of the vote. In contrast, Orban's nationalist Fidesz party managed to secure 55 seats with 37.8 per cent of the vote.

Following the announcement of the early results, Orban accepted the outcome of a "painful election".

In his victory speech delivered before thousands of supporters in central Budapest, Magyar said his government would seek to reposition Hungary more firmly within the European mainstream and strengthen ties with Western allies.

The election has been framed as a Russia vs European Union contest – with Orban aligned closely with Moscow, while Magyar positions himself with Ukraine and the EU. As Western leaders congratulated Magyar, they said Hungary chose Europe over Russia.

Orban has also received hefty support from US President Donald Trump and the MAGA movement. Just days before the polls, US Vice President JD Vance flew to Hungary to rally support around Orban. *—ANI*



Outgoing PM Viktor Orban & incumbent Peter Magyar *—PTI*

Carney on verge of securing majority government

TORONTO, 13 APRIL

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney is on the verge of securing a majority government as special elections are held in three districts on Monday.

Voting is underway in Toronto-area ridings—Scarborough Southwest and University-Rosedale—considered safe for the Liberals, and Terrebonne near Montreal, seen as a toss-up. The Liberals currently hold 171 seats in the House of Commons and need one more to reach the 172 required for a majority.

A majority would allow Carney's government to pass legislation without opposition support and remain in power until 2029. Recent defections from opposition parties, including members of the Conservative Party, have strengthened the Liberals' position. Experts say strained Canada-US ties under Donald Trump have rallied support behind Carney. *—PTI*

New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani salutes his supporters during an address marking his first 100 days in office at the Knockdown Center in New York *—PTI*

Mamdani celebrates 100 days as NYC Mayor

NEW YORK, 13 APRIL

New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani rallied on Sunday to celebrate his first 100 days in office and outline future goals focused on the city's working class. After highlighting early accomplishments, he unveiled plans to open a slate of city-run grocery stores.

The first store will open next year, with one in each borough by the end of his four-year term. "Eggs and bread will be cheaper—grocery shopping won't be an unsolvable equation," said Zohran Mamdani, a Socialist Democrat. He also plans to expand covered trash bins citywide by 2031, "say goodbye to black bags and say hello to the bins," he said.

Mamdani, 34, took office in January after a campaign centred on making New York City a more affordable place to live.

FREE BUS PLAN DELAYED

Mamdani told Politico last week that his plan for fast and free buses may be delayed until 2027, amid a lack of funds and bureaucratic difficulties. *—AGENCIES*

Mkts dive nearly 1% as US-Iran talks fail

Sensex tumbles 702.68 points, while Nifty falls 207.95 points; 2,573 stocks declined

MUMBAI, 13 APRIL

Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty closed nearly 1 per cent lower on Monday as the failure of US-Iran negotiations heightened concerns of a prolonged conflict driving crude oil prices sharply higher.

The 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 702.68 points or 0.91 per cent to settle at 76,847.57. During the day, it dived 1,681.93 points or 2.16 per cent to 75,868.32.

The 50-share NSE Nifty plunged 207.95 points or 0.86 per cent to end at 23,842.65.

From the 30-Sensex firms, Maruti, InterGlobe Aviation, Bajaj Finance, Reliance Industries, Tata Consultancy Services and HDFC Bank were the biggest laggards.

ICICI Bank, NTPC and Axis Bank were the winners.

The US and Iran failed to reach a peace deal at their historic 21-hour talks in Pakistan, leaving the fate of a tenuous two-week ceasefire in doubt, with both sides attempting to hold each other responsible for the collapse of the negotiations.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, jumped 7.73 per cent to USD 102.6 per barrel.

In Asian markets, South Korea's benchmark Kospi, Japan's Nikkei 225 index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index ended lower, while Shanghai's SSE Composite index settled marginally higher.

European markets were trading lower.

The BSE MidCap Select index dropped 0.82 per cent and SmallCap Select index declined 0.33 per cent.

Auto edged lower by 2.10 per cent, followed by Energy (1.34 per cent), Services (1.31 per cent), Oil & Gas (1.25 per cent), Consumer Discretionary (1.21 per cent), IT (1.17 per cent), and BSE Focused IT (1.02 per cent).Telecommunication, Utilities and Power were the winners.

A total of 2,573 stocks declined, while 1,790 advanced and 201 remained unchanged on the BSE.

Stock markets will remain closed on Tuesday during Baba Saheb Ambedkar Jayanti. *—PTI*

SILVER FALLS TO ₹2.45L/KG; GOLD FALLS TO ₹1.55L/10G

NEW DELHI, 13 APRIL

Silver prices declined Rs 1,800 to Rs 2.45 lakh per kilogram in the national capital on Monday, while gold fell to Rs 1.55 lakh per 10g amid weak global cues.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, silver decreased Rs 1,800, or nearly 1 per cent, to Rs 2,45,200 per kg (inclusive of all taxes) from Friday's closing level of Rs 2,47,000 per kg.

Gold of 99.9 per cent purity also edged lower by Rs 300 to Rs 1,55,000 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes).

Gold had finished at Rs 1,55,300 per 10g in the previous market session.

Bullion markets will remain closed on account of Dr Baba Saheb Ambedkar Jayanti.

Meanwhile, In the international markets, precious metal prices also moved lower. Spot silver slipped USD 1.58, or 2.09 per cent, to USD 74.31 per ounce, while gold fell from USD 25.92 to USD 4,722.26 per ounce. *—PTI*

Oil prices jump 7% ahead of US Hormuz blockade

NEW DELHI, 13 APRIL

Crude oil prices rose 7 per cent to Rs 9,759 per barrel in futures trade on Monday, after the US announced a Strait of Hormuz blockade following failed negotiations with Iran.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), crude oil for April appreciated Rs 606, nearly 7 per cent, to Rs 9,759 per barrel in a business turnover of 8,767 lots.

The contract touched an intraday high of Rs 9,850 per barrel, up by Rs 697, or 7 per cent.

The May contract also advanced Rs 550, or 6.47 per cent, to Rs 9,050 per barrel in 7,779 lots.

MCX crude oil prices opened with a sharp gap-up and hit the upper circuit, gaining over 6 per cent amid escalating US-Iran war concerns.

Globally, crude oil prices also increased.

The West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude contract for May increased USD 8.08, or 8.37 per cent, to USD 104.65 per barrel on the NYMEX, while Brent oil for June delivery gained USD 7.55, or 7.93 per cent, to USD 102.75 per barrel in New York. *—PTI*

Retail inflation inches up to 3.4% in March: Data

Retail inflation inched up marginally to 3.4 per cent in March compared to 3.21 per cent in the preceding month, mainly due to uptick in certain food items, amid the ongoing West Asia crisis, according to government data released on Monday.

The food inflation, based on the consumer price index (CPI), was estimated at 3.87 per cent in March as against 3.47 per cent in February.

The retail inflation released by the National Statistics Office (NSO) is based on a new series with a base year 2024.

High inflation was noticed during March in gold and silver jewellery, coconut (copra), tomato, and cauliflower.

On the other hand, inflation was in negative in onion, potato, garlic, arhar dal, and chickepeas, according to the NSO data. *—PTI*

Stay away from trading: Ajay Bagga amid mkt crash

Indian equity indices are set for a significant correction at the opening bell following President Trump's announcement of a blockade on the Strait of Hormuz.

Investors are advised to avoid attempting to time the market volatility. Invest, do your discipline monthly investment through the SIP route," said Ajay Bagga, banking and market expert said. He indicated that Indian markets are pointing toward a "1.3 to 1.5 per cent cut at the open."

India spent approximately USD 150 billion on energy imports, which may reach USD 225 billion to USD 250 billion. The disruption also threatens India's trade and remittance ecosystem. Bagga highlighted that nearly 20 per cent of Indian goods exports are facing hurdles as transit through the Red Sea and Gulf of Oman becomes constrained. *—PTI*

IMF flags global slowdown risk from war shock

Delivering a speech ahead of the IMF-World Bank Spring Meetings, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), **Kristalina Georgieva**, said the war has severely disrupted oil and gas supplies, damaged critical infrastructure, and heightened uncertainty in global trade and transport routes. She noted that key energy hubs, including major liquefied natural gas facilities in the Gulf, have suffered significant damage and may take years to fully recover, contributing to persistent supply constraints. She cautioned policymakers against unilateral measures, warning that such steps could aggravate instability. *—ANI*

JAL bid: NCLAT adjourns Vedanta plea

NEW DELHI, 13 APRIL

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) on Monday adjourned its hearing over mining giant Vedanta Group's petitions against the selection of Adani Enterprises' bid for debt-ridden Jaiprakash Associates Ltd (JAL).

The insolvency appellate tribunal adjourned the hearing on account of a change in the composition of the bench, which was hearing the two appeals filed by Vedanta Ltd. The change has been made due to the unavailability of a member of the bench.

NCLAT will decide the date for the next hearing shortly.

Vedanta has filed two petitions, challenging the 17 March order by the Allahabad bench of NCLT, which approved Adani Enterprises Ltd's Rs 14,535-crore bid to acquire JAL through the insolvency process.

On 24 March, NCLAT declined any interim stay on the order passed by the NCLT approving the Adani Group's bid for acquiring JAL.

However, it said the plan would be subject to the outcome of the appeals filed by the Anil Agarwal-led Vedanta Group.

This interim order by NCLAT was challenged before the Supreme Court, which also declined to grant a stay. However, the apex court had directed that if the monitoring committee planned to take any major policy decision, it should first obtain the Tribunal's sanction. *—PTI*

- Vedanta filed two petitions, challenging the 17 March order which approved Adani Enterprises Ltd's Rs 14,535-crore bid to acquire JAL.

India got most regressive tax advice from IMF: Oxfam

NEW DELHI, 13 APRIL

India received the highest regressive tax recommendations from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) between 2022 and 2024, according to an analysis by Oxfam.

The analysis, released ahead of the IMF and World Bank spring meetings in Washington, has flagged that the global body is applying "double standard" by giving largely progressive advice to wealthy countries while suggesting regressive measures for others that are "likely to exacerbate inequality".

About 59 per cent of the IMF's tax advice to low- and lower-middle-income countries was regressive, while 52 per cent of its recommendations to high-income countries were progressive.

A regressive tax refers to a uniform taxation system which burdens those in lower income groups more than high earners. A tax levied in proportion to one's income is termed progressive.

The US and Brazil received the most progressive IMF tax advice. Tax advice to South Asia was "by far the most regressive".

The IMF links its tax advice to inequality often for high-income countries (34 per cent) than low- and lower-middle-income countries (8 per cent).

Oxfam urged the IMF to "systematically place inequality at the heart of all fiscal advice", and discourage over-reliance on consumption taxes and that burden low-income households. *—PTI*

India auctioned 46 critical mineral blocks: Minister

NEW DELHI, 13 APRIL

The Union government has successfully auctioned 46 critical mineral blocks across six rounds and is now initiating the auction process for another 19 blocks in the seventh round to bolster national resource security, said Union Minister **Kishan Reddy** shared these details while addressing a roadshow for the the 7th Tranche Auction of Critical Mineral Blocks in Hyderabad.

He highlighted that amid shifting geopolitics, climate change, and economic concerns, critical minerals central to global strategy.

Reddy noted that the rise of these minerals is key to every nation's future and will play a defining role towards Viksit Bharat by 2047.

He emphasised that the event is reminder to stakeholders of their role in a larger national mission.

He stated that the government has completely scrapped import duties on 24 critical minerals to support the industry and that two vanadium and titanium blocks in Telangana are now ready for auction. *—ANI*

DATA PRIVACY CONCERNS

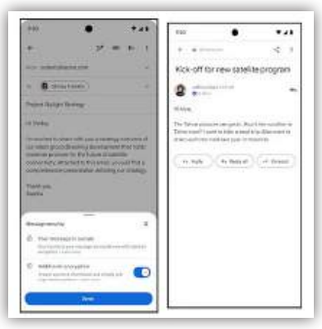
Google brings Gmail encryption to phones

BENGALURU, 13 APRIL

Google has announced the expansion of Gmail's end-to-end encryption (E2EE) support to Android and iOS devices, enabling users to compose, send, and read encrypted emails directly within the Gmail mobile app.

The feature is part of Gmail's client-side encryption (CSE) offering that will help organisations which handle sensitive data and require higher control over email security.

Users can enable encryption while composing an email by selecting the lock icon and choosing additional encryption. The message is then encrypted on the sender's device before being transmitted. Recipients using Gmail will receive the encrypted message as a regular email thread within the app.



For those not using Gmail, the message can be accessed securely through a web browser, where they will also be able to reply to emails.

The feature is available to Google Workspace enterprise users with client-side encryption enabled. Admins are required to activate Android and iOS support through the Admin Console. The feature is live for both the Rapid Release and the Scheduled Release domains

The expansion of E2EE to mobile devices allows users to securely access and manage sensitive emails from anywhere.

For businesses, the feature ensures that data remains encrypted end-to-end while still meeting compliance and data sovereignty requirements. The organisation has the ability to control the encryption keys. *—Agencies*

- Users can enable encryption while composing an email by selecting the lock icon and choosing additional encryption. The message is then encrypted on the sender's device before being transmitted. Recipients using Gmail will receive the encrypted message as a regular email thread within the app.

'R&D, investment key for India's drugmakers' global leadership'

NEW DELHI, 13 APRIL

India is positioned to play a leading role as the global pharmaceutical landscape evolves with emphasis on biologics, biosimilars and specialty medicine. Which needs bettere R&D, investment and industry participation, Union Minister JP Nadda said on Monday.

In a video at India Pharma 2026 event, Nadda, Nadda said that India has earned recognition driven by its affordable generic medicines.

Looking ahead, the Minister said, "Strengthening research and development will be critical. Effective public-private partnerships will play a key role in transitioning India towards high-value innovation." *—PTI*

Rupee weakens by 56P, settles at 93.39 against US

MUMBAI, 13 APRIL

The rupee slumped by 56 paise to settle at 93.39 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday after a failed US-Iran peace talk fuelled uncertainties in West Asia, leading to a surge in crude oil prices and a global chase for the greenback. According to forex analysts, uncertainties over the opening of Strait of Hormuz following the US announcement to blockade Iranian ports further intensified withdrawal for foreign capital from domestic equities, weakening the Indian currency. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 93.30 against the US dollar and moved between a low of 93.40 and a high of 93.25 during the session. On Friday, the rupee settled 32 paise lower at 92.83 against the US dollar. *—PTI*

GALLUP POLL

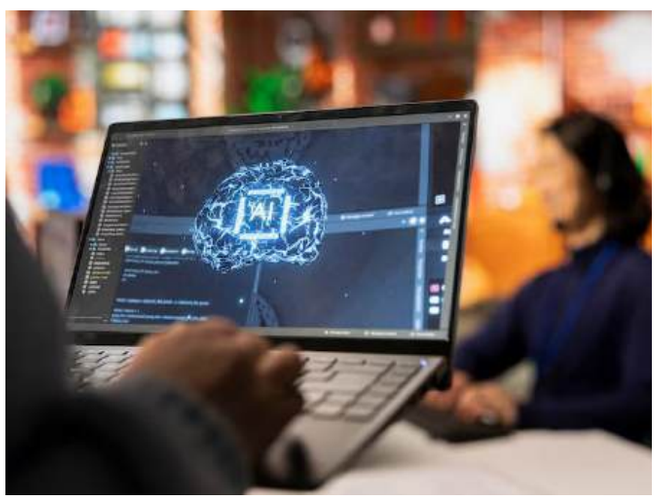
As AI use rises at work, many still avoid it

WASHINGTON, 13 APRIL

More American workers are experimenting with artificial intelligence in their jobs, but scepticism is still widespread.

New Gallup polling finds that while more employees are using AI frequently in their work, there's been an uptick in alarm that new technologies will replace their jobs. Many workers who are not using AI say they prefer to work without it, have ethical oppositions to the technology or worry about data privacy.

The poll, conducted in February, points to a divergence in how AI is reshaping American workplaces. Some find it to be a gamechanger for productivity and efficiency, while others are concerned about its potentially negative impacts.



Roughly 3 in 10 employees are frequent users of AI in their jobs, meaning they use it daily or a few times a week. About 2 in 10 are infrequent users, using AI tools at work a few times a month or a few times a year.

The Gallup poll found that about 4 in 10 workers say their organisation has adopted AI tools or technology to improve organisational practices. About two-thirds of those workers say AI has had an "extremely" or "somewhat" positive impact on their individual productivity and efficiency at work.

Workers using AI in management roles are more likely to say the technology has been at least "somewhat" positive for their productivity, compared with individual contributors. About 7 in 10 leaders using AI at least a few times a year say AI has made them more efficient at work, compared with just over half of individual contributors.

Even when companies make AI tools available, there's no guarantee employees will adopt them. About half of US employees use AI only once a year or not at all, according to the Gallup study. *—PTI*

AI MODELS LIKE ANTHROPIC'S MYTHOS RISK TO INDIA'S IT GROWTH: KOTAK

NEW DELHI, 13 APRIL

AI models such as Anthropic's Mythos could pose disruption risks to the growth of India's IT services sector, according to a report by Kotak Institutional Equities.

The report said the model "exhibits a step-jump in benchmark performance across software engineering tasks" and added that it "raises near- to medium-term disruption risks for IT services," particularly for companies with higher exposure to application services.

The brokerage noted that improvements in AI-driven coding could translate into real business impact. "The realisation of similar improvements in real-world scenarios risks turning our estimate of a 3-3.5 per cent annual growth headwind for the industry... from prudent to practical," the report said.

Kotak further said the model could "increase efficiencies across all IT services segments" but warned that gains may not be evenly distributed. Stronger automation in coding could widen productivity differences, especially impacting application development services more than other segments.

At the same time, the report flagged pricing pressure risks. It said the development "could pressurise the valuation multiples of IT services companies" and compound "near-term deflation risks for services."

However, Kotak also pointed to emerging opportunities for AI adoption. *—ANI*

IMSA bids to host World Mind Games in India

NEW DELHI, 13 APRIL

The International Mind Sports Association (IMSA) has invited bids from India and the world to host the next edition of the World Mind Games, to be held later this year or in early 2027. With Chess as the most played game in the world of mind sports, the IMSA think tank has followed on with the success of Indian players in the global circuit. While it was always Viswanathan Anand for almost three decades, the advent of Arjun Erigaisi, R Praggnanandhaa and, D Gukesh has given the game a boost in the last few years. "We are looking for partnership especially in Chess and other mind sports," said Sandeep Singh, the chief marketing officer of IMSA. —*PTI*

—*INSTAGRAM*

Father of wheelchair racing Bob Hall no more

BOSTON, 13 APRIL

Bob Hall, a childhood polio survivor who became known as the father of wheelchair racing after twice winning the Boston Marathon and then going on to build racing chairs for the generations of competitors that followed, has died at the age of 74. The Boston Athletic Association said on Sunday that Hall's family confirmed his death after a long illness. In 1975, Hall convinced Boston Marathon organizers to let him into the race and was promised a finishers' certificate like the one the runners got if he completed the 26.2-mile distance in under 3 hours. Hall crossed the line in 2:58. Hall, who lost the use of both legs from childhood polio, sued in 1978 to have wheelchair racers admitted into the New York Marathon. —*PTI*

JSW Sports roped in as Bengal Pro T20 partner

KOLKATA, 13 APRIL

The Cricket Association of Bengal has roped in JSW Sports on a three-year mandate as the commercial, marketing and operations partner for the Bengal Pro T20 League. Launched in 2024, the Bengal Pro T20 League features both men's and women's competitions, with district-based franchise teams. It is held annually between June and August. The partnership with JSW Sports was announced during the Season 3 launch ceremony, attended by CAB president Sourav Ganguly, other senior officials and cricketers including Jhulan Goswami, Mohammed Shami, Ajinkya Rahane, and Rinku Singh. "JSW Sports will work closely with the Cricket Association of Bengal to strengthen the league's overall ecosystem, drive innovation across broadcast and fan engagement, and unlock new commercial opportunities," the release said. —*PTI*

Reviving CSK to host desperate KKR today

CSK logged their 1st win against Delhi Capitals; Meanwhile, KKR is desperate for success

CHENNAI, 13 APRIL

Chennai Super Kings would look to build on the momentum gained from a much-needed victory in their previous match when they host a winless Kolkata Knight Riders in the Indian Premier League here on Tuesday.

CSK logged their first win of the season on the back of an all-round performance against Delhi Capitals that included Sanju Samson's first impactful knock, a 56-ball 115, for the storied franchise and a fine bowling effort.

A fit-again Dewald Brevis allowed CSK to tweak their bowling combination, making it possible for the side to defend 212 against Delhi Capitals.

Left-arm pacer Gurjapneet Singh impressed on his IPL debut, hitting the batters high on the bat and surprising them with extra bounce.

Jamie Overton too came into his own and was rewarded for hitting the deck consistently with a four-wicket haul.

Left-arm spinner Akeal Hosein, playing his first game of the season, added another dimension to the attack in the powerplay.

- Kolkata Knight Riders almost got the job done against Lucknow Super Giants but Mukul Choudhary played a blinder of a knock to deny Ajinkya Rahane and his team. The Tuesday's match will start at 7.30pm IST.

On the batting front, Samson finally has runs under his belt in his debut season for CSK, giving him the required confidence to go ballistic in the first six overs.

At the start of the tournament, it was announced that Mahendra Singh Dhoni would be out for couple of weeks due to a calf strain.

KKR, on the other hand, are desperate for success. They almost got the job done against Lucknow Super Giants but Mukul Choudhary played a blinder of a knock to deny Ajinkya Rahane and his team.

The Tuesday's match will start at 7.30pm IST. —*PTI*

Kolkata Knight Riders' Finnley Hugh Allen —*X/KKR*

Rohit Sharma finishes 6,000 IPL runs for MI

Mumbai Indians (MI) batting icon Rohit Sharma etched his name in the record books as he completed 6000 Indian Premier League (IPL) runs for the five-time champions. Hitman achieved this feat during his side's clash against the defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) in the ongoing IPL on Sunday in Mumbai. Sharma now has 6013 runs under his belt in 231 at an average of 29.76 and a strike rate of 132.82, including 40 half-centuries and two hundreds for the Mumbai-based franchise. After Rohit Suryakumar Yadav has the highest number of runs (3,809) for MI. —*ANI*

BCCI ACU showcauses RR manager

The Anti Corruption and Security Unit (ACSU) of BCCI has asked Rajasthan Royals manager Romi Bhinder to explain within 24 hours as to why he was using a cell phone in the dugout during an earlier IPL match against RCB in Guwahati. Bhinder was found scrolling his smart phone with teen sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi by his side. The PMOA protocols states clearly that Team Manager can use mobile phones but not in the dugout which tantamount to a breach. While enquiry is ongoing on the alleged breach, Bhinder was present at the toss during Monday's game between RR & SRH. —*PTI*

ICC announces record prize money for Women's T20 WC

DUBAI, 13 APRIL

The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Monday announced a record prize pool of Rs 82 crore for the upcoming Women's T20 World Cup, set to be held in England and Wales in two months' time.

The total purse has been increased by 10 per cent from the previous edition.

The tournament will feature 12 teams — up from 10 in 2024 — and will be played from 12 June to 5 July across seven venues, with the final scheduled at Lord's Cricket Ground.

While the total prize fund for the previous edition in the UAE stood at USD 7,958,077 (approximately Rs 74 crore), it has now risen to USD 8,764,615 (around Rs 82 crore), marking a 10 per cent increase over the 2024 edition.

The winners will take home USD 2,340,000 (Rs 21.8 crore approx), while the runners-up will receive USD 1,170,000 (Rs 10 crore approx). The losing semi-finalists will earn Rs 6.29 crore, while every group match win will earn teams Rs 29 lakh. The tournament will get underway with hosts England taking on Sri Lanka at Edgbaston, Birmingham, on 12 June.

The other teams in the fray are Australia, Bangladesh, India, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, Scotland, South Africa and the West Indies, with the 33-match event set to be played over 24 days.

Meanwhile, the T20 World Cup trophy will tour the host cities before culminating in London, with Scotland set to be the first stop from 7 to 10 May. —*PTI*

2026 FIDE CANDIDATES

Vaishali & Divya defeated, Praggnanandhaa settles for draw

NEW DELHI, 13 APRIL

R Vaishali and Divya Deshmukh both suffered defeats, while **R Praggnanandhaa** settled for a draw in Round 12 at the 2026 FIDE Candidates on Sunday.

Vaishali's loss proved particularly costly, as she slipped from sole leadership into a joint top position in the Women's Candidates alongside Zhu Jiner, with both now on seven points. The result has set up a gripping finish to the tournament, as per ESPN.

Vaishali lost to China's Zhu with white pieces after

a blunder in what was a tricky and crucial game, especially since it would have a bearing on who the women's champion would be. That Vaishali lost to a player who drew level with her on points can prove to be a big blow with only two more rounds to go in the tournament. Meanwhile, Anna Muzychuk held a draw while Bibisara Assaubayeva secured a win, leaving both just half a point behind leaders R Vaishali and Zhu Jiner.

Divya Deshmukh, who was previously joint second-last, suffered a defeat against bottom-placed Tan Zhongyi despite having the white pieces, resulting in both players now sharing last place with five points and being out of contention.

After a rest day, the penultimate round will see Vaishali face Tan, while Divya takes on Kateryna Lagno. —*ANI*

Jannik Sinner reclaims No. 1 spot from Alcaraz

ROME, 13 APRIL

Jannik Sinner is pleased to have the No. 1 ranking back. His biggest takeaways from a victory over Carlos Alcaraz in the Monte Carlo Masters final, though, were finally winning a big clay-court title and doing it by beating his biggest rival on his most challenging surface.

"It means a lot to me, because it means I'm progressing," Sinner said.

For Sinner, it was a first step toward achieving his main goal for 2026: winning the French Open to complete a career Grand Slam. That's an achievement that Alcaraz completed when he won the Australian Open in January — making him at 22 the youngest man to have held aloft all four major trophies.

"Winning a big tournament on clay was one of our goals for this year so there's no better way to start," said Simone Vagnozzi, who coaches the 24-year-old Sinner alongside Darren Cahill.

Sunday's meeting was the first on clay between the top two men's tennis players since

Alcaraz saved three match points and came back to beat Sinner in a fifth-set tiebreaker in last year's French Open final.

Sinner outclassed his rival 7-6(5), 6-3, capturing not only the title but also making sure he gets the number one ranking on Monday.

After this two-hour, 15-minute clash, the Italian became the second player, joining Novak Djokovic, to win the Miami Open and the Monte Carlo Masters back-to-back. —*Agencies*

Army boxers win 8 medals at Asian C'ships

NEW DELHI, 13 APRIL

Indian Army boxers has brought laurels to the country, returning with a haul of eight medals, including three gold, at the recently-concluded Asian Boxing Championships in Mongolia.

Giving details of the medal winners, officials said on Monday said Vishwanath Suresh (gold), Sachin Siwach (silver), Akash (bronze), Lokesh (bronze) and Narender Berwal (bronze) were among the medal winners in the men's section.

In the women's competition, Preeti Pawar (gold), Jaismine Lamboria (silver) and Arundhati Chaudhary (gold) also finished on the podium.

"Indian Army boxers trained at the Army Sports Institute under the Indian Army's Mission Olympics programme delivered an outstanding performance at the Asian Boxing Championship, winning a total of eight medals including three gold, two silver and three bronze medals," official said.

The Army Sports Institute is widely described as a premier sports training establishment under the Army's Mission Olympics programme, which was launched to identify and train promising sportspersons for top international competition.

"Among the men, Vishwanath won a gold in the 50kg category, Sachin secured a silver in the 60kg category, while Akash won a bronze in the 75-kg category, while Lokesh claimed a bronze in the 85-kg category and Narender added a bronze in the +90-kg category," the official said.

"Preeti won a gold in the 54-kg category, Jasmine secured a silver in the 57-kg category and Arundhati clinched a gold in the 70-kg category," the Army official said. —*PTI*

FIFA unveils costlier tickets for WC

NEW YORK, 13 APRIL

FIFA added new, even more expensive tiers of tickets for this year's World Cup, asking up to $4,105 for a front category 1 seat at the US opener against Paraguay in Inglewood, California, on 12 June.

Last week, FIFA had asked for a top price of $2,735 for category 1 tickets for the match but added new "front category" pricing.

FIFA also added a front category 2 tier to its ticket sales website without public announcement, asking $1,940 to $2,330 for those tickets for the US opener.

The new categories were first reported Thursday by The Athletic.

The World Cup will be held from 11 June to 19 July in 16 cities in the US, Mexico and Canada.

Soccer's governing body had in its 9 September "ticket products and categories" information, called category 1 "the highest-priced seats, located primarily in the lower tier" but appears to have withheld some seats from that category. It had labelled category 2 as "positioned outside of category 1 areas, available in both lower and upper tiers."

FIFA did not respond to an email sent to its media office seeking comment.

FIFA added seats at up to $3,360 in front category 1 for Canada's opener against Bosnia and Herzegovina on June 12 in Toronto.

For round of 16 games, it added $905 seats in Philadelphia. —*PTI*

India may field separate teams for Hockey WC, Asian Games

NEW DELHI, 13 APRIL

With the Asian Games and the World Cup set to be held within a span of three weeks later this year, Hockey India is considering sending separate teams to the two tournaments, prioritising the continental event as it offers a direct qualification pathway to the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

The World Cup is scheduled to be held in Belgium and the Netherlands from 15 to 30 August, while the Asian Games, an Olympic qualifier, will take place in Japan from 19 September to 4 October.

The gap between the two tournaments is only 20 days.

"We need to have two teams for the World Cup and Asian Games, and since the Asian Games is a qualification for the Los Angeles Olympics, our A team should go there," as per a source from the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.

There will be two separate FIH Hockey World Cup tournaments, one for men and the other for women. Both will be co-hosted by Belgium and the Netherlands from 15 to 30 August. —*ANI*

F1 SAYS UNLIKELY

Sports Min pushes for F1 in India in 2027

NEW DLEHI, 13 APRIL

Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Monday said he is pushing for a Formula 1 race in India in 2027 by streamlining the tax-related hurdles that led to the event leaving the country in 2013 after three editions.

In an interaction with media here, Mandaviya said at least three companies have shown interest in running the Buddh International Circuit in Greater Noida where the race is proposed to be held.

The Indian Grand Prix was dropped after 2013 due to tax and bureaucratic hurdles.

"There will be an F1 race in India in 2027. First race will be at Buddha International Circuit," Mandaviya said.

However, sources in Formula 1, owned by Liberty Media, said a race in 2027 is highly unlikely even though India is being seen a market of interest once again.

"2027 is highly unlikely but India is a market of interest. We have many amazing fans in the country but we are not close to an agreement," said the source.

While announcing its broadcast partner in India last December, Formula 1 said that it had a strong fanbase of 79 million in the country.

Adani, which is set to acquire debt ridden Jaypee Group's assets including the Formula 1 track in Greater Noida, has expressed its desire to revive the high-profile race in India.

- However, sources in Formula 1, owned by Liberty Media, said a race in 2027 is highly unlikely even though India is being seen a market of interest once again. The sport gained popularity since Liberty Media took over in 2017.

Mandaviya said the government will take its due part in attracting Formula 1 to India.

The sport has massively gained in popularity since Liberty Media took over in 2017. —*PTI*

Indians win 2 more golds at Pickleball Championship

NEW DELHI, 13 APRIL

Arjun Singh and Dhiren Patel clinched a gold medal each in their respective singles events in the US Open Pickleball Championship in Naples, Florida.

Arjun won the men's singles 5.0 after beating Ashton Patterson in straight sets (13-11, 11-6). Dhiren was stretched to the limit by Juan Arraya in the 40+ Pro men's singles category but eventually won 11-9, 3-11, 11-9.

Having won the US Open before in the same category, Dhiren's experience was the key factor in getting him across the line in the closely contested final.

India's tally in the tournament now stands at three gold medals.

"One of the tougher matches so far but I was able to execute my plans and

Pickleball players Arjun Singh and Aditya singh —*INSTAGRAM*

bring home the gold. Winning this category more than once is very special," said Dhiren. —*PTI*